

Flu Vaccination FAQ

- **Am I eligible for a flu vaccination?**

If you fall into any of these criteria, then you are eligible:

- Adults 65 and over
- pregnant
- children aged 2 and 3 on 31 August 2020
- children in primary school
- children in year 7 (secondary school)
- frontline health or social care workers

if you have a long-term condition such as:

- a heart problem
- a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or severe asthma
- a kidney disease
- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment)
- liver disease
- had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- diabetes
- a neurological condition, eg multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy
- a learning disability
- a problem with your spleen, eg sickle cell disease, or you have had your spleen removed
- are seriously overweight (BMI of 40 and above)
- People on the NHS Shielded Patient List for COVID-19 are all eligible for a free flu vaccine and it is really important this year that they receive it.

Later in the year the flu vaccine may be giving to people ages 50 to 64. More information will be available later in the autumn.

- **If I turn 65 during flu season, will I be eligible?**

You're eligible for the flu vaccine this year (2020 to 2021) if you're aged 65 or over on the 31 March 2021 (born on or before 31 March 1956)

- **If I am eligible, when will I be invited?**

We are inviting patients in groups and if you are eligible then you will be contacted in due course. We will not receive the vaccines for under 65s until mid-October, so we are starting by contacting our over 65 patients. If you are over 65 and have an appointment booked in the surgery after the 25th September, then the clinician will be able to vaccinate you during that appointment.

- **Where will my child be vaccinated?**

Children aged 2 and 3, plus 4-year olds who were 3 on the 31st August 2020 will be vaccinated at the surgery. Schoolchildren will be vaccinated at their school.

- **What can I do to protect children who are too young to get vaccinated?**

Flu can be a very unpleasant illness for children, with potentially serious complications, including bronchitis and pneumonia. To protect young children, ensure any older siblings are vaccinated (if eligible) stay away from people who are sick and always cover your nose and mouth with a tissue if you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser after coughing or sneezing.

- **If I'm healthy, do I need a flu vaccination?**

While it's especially important for people who have a chronic illness to get the flu shot, anyone who fits the criteria — even if you are healthy — can benefit from being vaccinated.

- **Can I decline the flu vaccination?**

Yes, but please let us know so that we can update our records. This will only exempt you from this year's flu season, you will still be called next year. If you change your mind after declining, then you will still be able to be vaccinated.

- **If I feel a cold coming on, should I get the flu vaccination?**

Yes, there is no need to delay having the vaccine if you have a minor illness with no high temperature. If you have a high temperature, then it is best to wait until you are feeling better. Having the vaccination when you're not well can prolong your recovery. Also if you develop a fever after the vaccination you won't know if it is a reaction to the vaccine or due to your illness.

- **If I'm allergic to eggs will the vaccine harm me?**

People who have an egg allergy may be at increased risk of having a reaction to the injectable flu vaccine. This is because some flu vaccines are made using eggs. We use a vaccine that has a low egg contact which reduces the risk of having a reaction.

Will the vaccine give me the flu?

No, the vaccine does not contain any live viruses so it cannot cause the flu. You may get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a few days afterwards and your arm may feel a bit sore where you had the injection. It takes a week or two to get protection from the vaccine, but people assume that because they got sick after getting the vaccine, the flu vaccination caused their illness.

- **If I got vaccinated last year, do I still need a flu vaccination?**

You need to have a flu vaccination every year as the antibodies that protect you from flu decline over time, and flu strains can also change from year to year. In February each year the World Health Organization (WHO) assesses the strains of flu virus that are most likely to be circulating in the northern hemisphere over the following winter. Based on this assessment, WHO recommends which flu strains the vaccines should contain for the forthcoming winter.

- **How safe will it be to attend for a vaccination?**

Yes, we have put extra precautions in place this year to ensure the safety of all patients and staff. Vaccinations will be by appointment only and we will be asking patients to arrive no more than 5 minutes before their appointment time. Clinicians will be wearing PPE and patients will be asked to wear a face covering whilst in the building.

- **Where will the vaccinations be conducted?**

All our flu clinics will be held at The Grove Medical Centre.

- **Will there be appointments for a vaccination?**

Yes, we are doing appointment only clinics this year so that we can manage how many patients are in the building at any one time to maintain safe social distancing.

- **Will we be required to wear a mask?**

Once you enter the building, all patients are required to wear a mask unless they fall into one of the exempted criteria.

- **How will the most vulnerable patients be catered for?**

We will have a drive-through service available for those too vulnerable to enter the building and we may be able to vaccinate patients at home. Please contact the surgery if you feel you are unable to attend as these will be restricted to only the most vulnerable patients.

- **Can I pay for a vaccination if I am not in an eligible criterion?**

Unfortunately, we cannot offer private vaccinations, but a pharmacy will be able to provide this service.

REMINDER.... There are NO walk-in clinics this year, please do not turn up without an appointment as you will be turned away.