

Health and Wellbeing

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Staff Flu FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions about the flu and flu vaccination

Will the flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19?

No, the flu vaccine won't protect you against COVID-19. But it will help protect you against flu, which is an unpleasant and potentially serious infection that can cause complications leading to hospital admission, permanent disability or death. Helping to protect against flu is particularly important if COVID-19 is still circulating because people vulnerable to COVID-19 are also at risk of complications from flu.

New research from PHE also suggests that co-infection with both flu and COVID-19 is associated with a greater risk of more severe illness and death.

Will I be safe when I go for the flu vaccine if COVID-19 is still around?

While COVID-19 is in circulation, providers of flu vaccination will have measures in place to keep you safe. Staff giving the vaccine will be wearing protective equipment to protect both you and themselves from the virus. Appointment times may also be scheduled to reduce numbers in the waiting area or you may be asked not to arrive early.

Should I wear a face covering when I go for my flu vaccine?

Yes. In line with government advice, please wear a face covering to your appointment. This can be a mask you have bought or made, a face covering worn for religious or cultural reasons (as long as they cover the mouth and nose) or a surgical mask you have been given because you are shielding. For guidance on how to wear and make a face mask, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Flu Vaccination Myths and Facts

Some common myths and facts about the Flu and Flu vaccine

The vaccine gives you the flu

It can't! The adult vaccines do not contain whole virus, or a live virus, it is made up of inactivated parts of a vaccine which are not physically capable of infecting you with flu. You may have red mark, or a sore arm, and possibly even a light temperature after the vaccine, this is just a response from your Immune system and suggests the vaccine is doing what it needs to do.

I was really ill after the vaccine I'm not having it again

The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu, but it is not uncommon to have a slight temperature and feel a little sore after the vaccine as this shows your immune system is beginning to respond to the vaccine. It cannot make you ill. The vaccine is also given at the same time of year as other bugs (including the flu itself, but also coughs, colds, norovirus etc.) begin to increase in our community, it is quite probable that if you come down with a bug just after the flu vaccine that this was coincidence and you would have caught that anyway.

I've had the flu and it wasn't that bad, I'll take my chances.

You would know if you've had the flu, it is much much worse than a heavy cold. Flu symptoms come on suddenly and sometimes severely. They include fever, chills, headaches and aching muscles, as well as a cough and sore throat. You're likely to spend 2 or 3 days in bed, and symptoms can last a week or even 2. If you get complications caused by flu, you could become seriously ill and have to go to hospital.

I don't catch the flu so I've never needed the vaccine

Just because you are fortunate enough to never have caught the flu, doesn't mean you never will. Anyone can catch the flu and some people are more susceptible than others. The flu virus is indiscriminate, it will attack anyone and everyone and, even in the most healthy people. It is not worth risking.

I live happily with my long term condition so I don't need the flu jab

Even if you have a stable long term condition and don't usually get bothered by it, your condition could mean that you are more likely to catch flu, or more likely to respond badly when you do. Some long term health conditions can be made worse when a person has flu, making them difficult to manage and even life threatening. Also, some health conditions mean the flu affects you more severely and you are more likely to get complications including pneumonia, and be at higher risk of dying from the flu.

I had the jab last year, I don't need it again.

The flu vaccine for each winter helps provide protection against the strains of flu that are likely to be present and that may be different from last year's. It is strongly recommended that even if you were vaccinated last year, you should be vaccinated this year.

What are the first signs of flu and are they different to COVID-19?

FLU	COVID-19
A sudden fever – a temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) or above	High temperature
A dry, chesty cough	A new, continuous cough
A headache	A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
Tiredness and weakness	
Chills	
Aching muscles	
Limb or joint pain	
Diarrhoea or abdominal pain	
Nausea and vomiting	
A sore throat	
A runny or blocked nose	
Sneezing	
Loss of appetite	
Difficulty sleeping	
The symptoms are similar for children and adults, but children can also get pain in their ear and appear less active.	

How can flu be treated?

You can treat flu symptoms yourself to help faster recovery, by:

- resting and sleeping well
- keeping warm
- taking paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower your temperature and treat aches and pains
- drinking plenty of water to avoid dehydration (urine should be light yellow or clear)

Where can I get help for my symptoms?

A pharmacist can provide treatment advice and recommend flu remedies. Many flu remedies from the pharmacy contain paracetamol or ibuprofen. It is therefore important to be careful not to use them in addition to paracetamol and ibuprofen tablets, to avoid taking more than the recommended dose. It is also important to speak to a pharmacist before giving medicines to children.

You should contact your GP or NHS 111 if:

- your symptoms don't improve after seven days
- you're worried about your child's symptoms
- you're 65 years old or over
- you're pregnant
- you have a serious or long-term health condition – for example, diabetes or a heart, lung, kidney, liver or neurological disease or are morbidly obese
- you have a weakened immune system – for example, because of chemotherapy or HIV

Can flu be spread without symptoms?

Yes, flu can spread without symptoms. It is a virus that spreads from person to person through droplets in the air and on hard surfaces. It is possible to have the infection without having any symptoms.

For more information about the flu or the flu vaccination programme, visit the [NHS website](#).



The flu virus kills thousands every year.
The flu vaccine is the best protection
for you and those around you.

JUST GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB
Ask your pharmacist or GP if you're eligible.

Flu
vaccine **help us
help you**