

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for people who are either in receipt of a carers' allowance and/or are the main 'informal' carer for an elderly, disabled person, or somebody who lives with a serious long term condition, and explains the importance of having a FREE annual flu vaccine to protect you from getting the influenza virus, commonly known as 'flu'.

Why do I need a vaccine?

Carers are eligible for a FREE flu vaccine because they provide an invaluable service to the community in caring for family members and friends who may be elderly, disabled or have a serious long term condition and require the help and attention carers can offer. If you become ill with flu you may not be able to care for the person or people you look after.

What is Flu?

Many people think having flu is like having a bad cold, but in reality flu is a nasty respiratory virus which can make you feel very unwell.

Most people who catch flu have to take time off work or cannot undertake their normal daily activities. For some people the symptoms are so bad they are admitted to hospital.

Some of these complications can be life threatening. Every year over 11,000 people in England die from complications caused by the flu virus. Many of these deaths could have been prevented by having the flu vaccination.

Why is this important for you?

If you care for somebody who is immunosuppressed – for example is receiving chemotherapy for cancer - and you catch flu you may pass the virus on to them which could be very dangerous for that person.

If you become ill with flu and cannot properly look after the person or people you care for their health may be put at risk if they cannot take their correct medication or feed themselves properly.

If you become ill with flu and the person or people you care for rely on you to do their shopping or help them get to appointments or day care services, this could make their condition worse or hinder their recovery if they are recovering from treatment or an operation.

Preventing flu in the first place is the best option.

How can you protect yourself?

The most effective way to protect yourself from flu is to have a FREE Flu Vaccine each winter.

The flu vaccination season runs from October to February, but most people get flu in December and January, so the sooner you have the vaccination the sooner you will be protected.

It is important to have the vaccination every year because the virus can change, and the previous year's vaccine may not offer you the right protection against the virus in circulation this year.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can flu be treated with antibiotics?

A. No. Flu is a virus and the only way to be really protected is with a flu vaccine.

Q. Will having the vaccine give me flu?

A. No. The vaccine contains an inactive form of the virus which cannot cause flu. Some people may have a sore arm and mild aches and pains which means the vaccine is working and should only last 48 hours.

Q. Is the vaccine safe?

A. Yes. The vaccine is known to be very safe and can be given to babies and very elderly people with very few problems or reactions.

Where can I get a vaccine?

Having your vaccination at your GP Practice

Everybody who is eligible for a FREE Flu Vaccine can get one at their GP Practice from early October.

You may receive an invitation by letter, telephone call, text message or email or the information may be on the GP Practice website, depending on how your GP Practice communicates with their patients. If your GP Practice is not aware that you care for somebody informally you should let them know for their records.

Many GP Practices will hold large flu vaccination clinics, and you may not need an appointment for these special clinics. It is best to find out dates and times by calling them or checking on the Practice website.

If you have not heard about getting a flu vaccination by early October it is really important that you call your GP Practice to arrange an appointment to have a vaccination.

Remember the earlier you have your vaccination, the better protected you will be.

Having your vaccination in a community pharmacy

It may be more convenient for you to have your FREE Flu Vaccine at a participating community pharmacy – particularly if you work or find it difficult to get to your GP Practice. Many community pharmacies can offer this service for patients who are eligible for a FREE Flu Vaccine. If you have the vaccination in a pharmacy they will take your details and let your GP Practice know you have had the vaccination.

If you need more information:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Liveweel/winterhealth/Pages/Fluandthefluvaccine.aspx>

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/flu-jobs>

The Flu Vaccination is **FREE** and **EFFECTIVE**
book your appointment today



Don't forget my Flu Jab

Flu Vaccinations and You

Flu Vaccinations and Informal Carers of Elderly or Disabled People



What flu is

Why you need a vaccine

Where to get a vaccine

It's FREE because YOU need it