



FLU VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN



THINK
PHARMACY

FLU VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN

Influenza (flu) is a very infectious illness caused by the flu virus. Flu spreads easily and infects both children and adults.

Children are more likely than adults to get severe complications of flu. Children who are sick with flu miss days in crèche, childcare and school. They also miss out on their usual activities such as hobbies and sports.

Children aged 2 to 12 years can now get the nasal flu vaccine for free from your local pharmacy. The flu vaccine will help protect your child against flu and reduce the spread of flu to others, for example, their brothers and sisters, parents, and grandparents.



What are the complications of flu?

Most children who get the flu have mild symptoms. But every winter some children can get complications of flu.

Complications of flu include:

- Pneumonia
- Bronchitis
- Inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) but this is rare

Children with these complications may need hospital treatment. Some may need intensive care. Children with chronic health conditions are at risk of serious complications from flu. In the last 10 years, almost 5,000 children were admitted to hospital with complications of flu. Almost 200 children had to have treatment in intensive care and 40 children died.

How is the vaccine given?

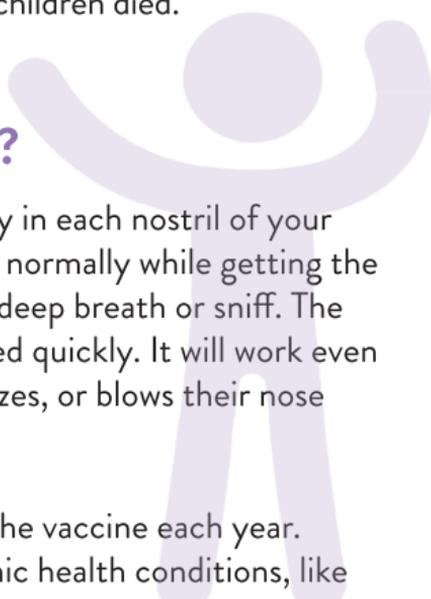
The vaccine is given as a single spray in each nostril of your child's nose. Your child can breathe normally while getting the vaccine. There is no need to take a deep breath or sniff. The vaccine is not painful and is absorbed quickly. It will work even if your child has a runny nose, sneezes, or blows their nose after the vaccination.

Most children need only 1 dose of the vaccine each year. However, some children with chronic health conditions, like chronic heart or lung conditions, may need 2 doses. The doses are given 4 weeks apart if they have never had a flu vaccine.

Who should not get the nasal flu vaccine?

Your child should not get the vaccine if they:

- Have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of the flu vaccine or any of its ingredients
- Have severe asthma or if they have been wheezy or needed their inhaler more than usual in the 3 days before the vaccination
- Are taking medicines called salicylates, which include aspirin
- Have a severely weakened immune system because of certain medical conditions or treatments





- Are living with someone who has a severely weakened immune system, for example, a person who recently had a bone marrow transplant

Your child may not be able to have the nasal flu vaccine. Speak to your pharmacist about getting the vaccine as an injection.

If your child is 6 months to 2 years of age and is in an at-risk group for flu, they will be offered a flu vaccine injection. This is because the nasal spray is not licensed for children under the age of 2.

Delaying your vaccination

You should delay your child's vaccination if they are not well and have a high temperature. The vaccination can be delayed until they feel better.

If your child has a very blocked or runny nose, it might stop the vaccine from getting into their system. In this case, delay the vaccine until their nose is clear.

Side-effects of the nasal flu vaccine

The most common side-effects are mild and include:

- A runny or blocked nose
- Headache
- Muscle aches

Some children get a fever (temperature) after the vaccine. It is usually mild and goes away on its own. If your child has a fever or a headache, you can give them paracetamol or ibuprofen. Only give aspirin and medicines called salicylates to children that have been prescribed by a doctor. This is especially important in the 4 weeks after getting the vaccine.

Serious side-effects, such as a severe allergic reaction, are rare.

There is no evidence that you can catch flu from the nasal flu spray.

Be aware that anti-vaccine stories are spread online through social media. They may not be based on scientific evidence and could put your child at risk of a serious illness.

Vaccine safety

All vaccines are thoroughly tested to make sure they will not harm you or your child. The flu vaccine for children has a good safety record. Millions of children in the US and the UK have been vaccinated safely and successfully.

There is no thiomersal, aluminium or mercury in the flu vaccine used in the 2020/2021 campaign. There is a very small amount of Gelatin in the nasal flu vaccine. Gelatin is used as a preservative in the vaccine.

Source: www.hse.ie > Flu Vaccination > Flu Vaccine for Children



Pharmacy stamp

For more information, visit

www.hse.ie/flu