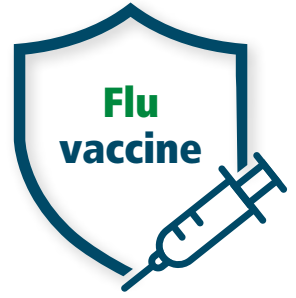


2024



Flu vaccine

**Important information for
poultry workers and
bird handlers**

Please read this leaflet before
your vaccine appointment.

What is flu?

Influenza (flu) is an infectious virus which spreads through the air when people cough or sneeze, or by touching surfaces where it has landed then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Symptoms

Flu symptoms come on very quickly and can include:

- a sudden fever (temperature of 38°C or above)
- muscle aches and pains
- chills
- feeling extremely tired
- headache
- dry cough, sore throat and stuffy nose

Flu can be serious. For some people, it can lead to complications requiring hospital care and can be life-threatening.

For more information, visit www.nhsinform.scot/influenza

The flu vaccine

The flu vaccine is effective at stopping the spread of the most common human flu virus types expected to be circulating this winter and will protect you from serious illness. It works by teaching your body's immune system how to protect itself from the disease.

The flu vaccine is updated each year to help give the best protection against the types of flu virus expected in Europe, including the UK. However, there's still a chance you could get flu if you get a type of flu virus not included in this year's vaccine. If you do get flu and have been vaccinated, the symptoms are likely to be milder and not last as long.

It takes around 10 days for it to protect you after getting the vaccine. The flu vaccine cannot give you flu.

Who's being offered the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is offered to adults who are most at risk of getting seriously ill from flu. This winter, NHSScotland is also offering the free flu vaccine to certain poultry workers and bird handlers to protect them from getting ill with the flu virus.

You're invited to get the flu vaccine if you:

- work at, or regularly visit, poultry units and poultry processing units (including inspection staff)
- cull and/or clean at confirmed bird flu outbreak premises
- are likely to be handling live unwell birds where bird flu is suspected
- are involved in the collection of wild or domestic bird carcasses where bird flu is suspected, including sea birds

Why are poultry workers and bird handlers being offered the flu vaccine?

Bird flu is a virus that causes disease in birds, but it can be passed to humans. Poultry, pigeons and wild or migratory birds, such as ducks, can become infected with the virus.

If there is a bird flu outbreak, there is a risk that people working closely with poultry and other birds could get the bird flu virus. If they get human flu at the same time, the two viruses could mix in their bodies to make a new type of flu virus. A new flu virus produced in this way could potentially be very infectious and cause serious illness in people, as they would not have any immunity to a new virus.

Will the flu vaccine stop me from getting bird flu?

No, the flu vaccine will not protect you from bird flu.

However, the vaccine will give you the best possible protection against human flu viruses. This will lower the risk of you having human flu and bird flu at the same time, and reduces the risk of a new type of flu virus being made.

The vaccine will also help reduce your risk of serious illness if you were to catch both types of flu virus at the same time.

How do I get the flu vaccine?

Vaccination clinics are available across Scotland from September until 31 March. You can make an appointment at a time and venue that suits you.

You can find out which clinics are available close to your home or workplace by:

- visiting the online booking portal at **www.nhsinform.scot/flu**
- calling the national vaccination helpline on **0800 030 8013**.

How safe is the flu vaccine?

All medicines (including vaccines) are tested for safety and efficacy before they're allowed to be used. Once they're in use, the safety and effectiveness of vaccines continues to be carefully monitored.

Efficacy: how well a vaccine prevents illness during testing.

Effectiveness: how well a vaccine prevents illness once it's being used within a population.

The flu vaccine has been used in Scotland's flu vaccination programme since 2000, with millions of doses given.

Are there any reasons I should not get the vaccine?

There are very few people who cannot have the vaccine. If you've had a confirmed severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to any of the vaccine ingredients or a previous dose of the flu vaccine, you should seek advice from your health professional.



More information about the flu vaccine (including its ingredients and possible side effects) is available in the manufacturer's patient information leaflet, available by visiting www.nhsinform.scot/flu or by calling **0800 030 8013**.

What are the side effects?

Like all medicines, the flu vaccine can cause side effects. This is normal but not everyone gets them. It shows the vaccine is teaching your body's immune system how to protect itself from the disease.

Side effects are usually mild and may include:

- tenderness, swelling and/or redness at the injection site
- a headache
- muscle aches
- a fever (temperature of 38°C or above)

These common side effects are much less serious than developing flu or complications associated with flu, and they usually go away within a few days.

What should I do if I'm concerned about side effects?

You can rest and take paracetamol (follow the dose advice in the packaging) to help you feel better. If your side effects seem to get worse or if you're concerned, call **NHS 24** free on **111** and tell them about your vaccination. This is so they can assess you properly.

Reporting side effects

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card Scheme:

- online at **www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard**
- by using the Yellow Card app
- by calling **0800 731 6789**



Translations



Easy read



BSL



Audio



Large print



Braille

For more information, including other formats and translation support:



www.nhsinform.scot/fluleaflets



0800 030 8013



phs.otherformats@phs.scot



Information correct at time of publication. Please visit www.nhsinform.scot/flu for the latest information.

You have rights in relation to the access and the use of your personal health information. For more information about your rights or how the NHS uses your personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation visit:

www.nhsinform.scot/confidentiality

www.nhsinform.scot/data-protection

www.informationgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/use-of-your-immunisation-data

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