



Increasing uptake for **Flu Vaccine in Health and Care Workers**

Toolkit for managers in long-term care facilities

November 2022

HSE National Immunisation Office

[hse.ie/flu](https://www.hse.ie/flu)

#YourBestShot

Flu vaccine for health and care workers

Every year the flu vaccine is offered to health and care workers to protect them and to prevent the spread of influenza to vulnerable residents and service users. Health and care workers should get the flu vaccine to protect themselves, their residents or service users, and their families.

Health and care workers are 10 times more likely to get flu than the general public, and 1 in every 5 health and care workers get flu each year.

It is expected that both COVID-19 and flu will be circulating this winter, and we know that co-infection with both viruses at the same time can potentially cause significant problems for vulnerable residents or service users, so this year it is very important that health and care workers take the opportunities on offer to get vaccinated as soon as possible in the flu season.

In healthcare settings with high levels of flu vaccination there are lower rates of flu-like illness, reduced hospitalisations and death from flu in people aged 65 and older, and less sick leave in health and care workers.

Useful information and resources


We have developed resources about children's nasal spray flu vaccine to support vaccinators, including:


- An e-learning HSeLand programme: **The Flu Vaccine - Protect Yourself, Protect Others** available for all HSE staff and staff from HSE-funded services at hseland.ie
- Share this video about the flu vaccine for health and care workers <https://youtu.be/4lrtGU9fVkm>
- Share this video from **health and care workers** on why they get the flu vaccine <https://youtu.be/lfw0TMhmT-0>
- Frequently asked questions about influenza vaccines available at <https://bit.ly/FluHCPs>
- The flu vaccine is recommended for all pregnant women, including health and care workers, and can be given at any stage of pregnancy. Share this video from **Dr Maeve Eogan** about the importance of flu vaccination for pregnant women, including health and care workers https://youtu.be/PICDPX_wNPc

And more information on HSE and NIO websites: hse.ie/flu and immunisation.ie


5 tips to increase health and care worker vaccine uptake


To improve flu vaccination uptake rates of staff in your facility, we recommend managers:

 Ensure that all staff are aware of the multiple routes of access to vaccination, including peer vaccination, vaccines clinics on site, local vaccination clinics, GP practices and community pharmacies.

 Regularly communicate updates to staff about flu and vaccination clinic times, for example, by weekly newsletters, email/text reminders, or via your facility's website and social media posts.

 Have HSE information materials like posters and leaflets on display in your facility.

 For staff not able to attend the organised flu vaccination clinics in their place of work, signpost to their GP or community pharmacy, where the flu vaccine can be given.
Use the **Pharmacy Finder** on HSE website: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/pharmacies-flu/>

 Make sure the health and care workers know the flu vaccine is **free of charge** for them, no matter where they access the vaccine.

What is flu?

Flu is a highly infectious illness caused by the flu virus.

The flu season begins at the **start of October** and lasts until the **end of April**.



Patients rely on you to protect them

People with long-term health conditions may not get sufficient protection from the flu vaccine. They rely on you to be vaccinated to protect them.



Prevent the spread of flu and save lives

High vaccination rates of health and care worker in Europe show **lower rates of flu-like illness, hospitalisations and deaths** from flu in older people, and a **reduction in sick leave** among health and care workers.



If you work in healthcare

You are **ten times more likely** to catch flu.

1 in 5 health and care workers get flu every year.



During a flu season in Ireland

200-500 people could die.

Source: (HPSC)



You need both the COVID-19 and flu vaccines

Health and care workers should be **up to date with both vaccines to provide the most protection this winter**.

If you are due a COVID-19 booster, you can get the booster **at the same time, before or after** your flu vaccine.



You need to get the flu vaccine every year

Flu strains change each year and the the antibodies that protect you fade over time so you need to get the flu vaccine **every flu season**.



The flu vaccine is safe

Side effects from the vaccine are generally **mild and short-lived**. Mild symptoms like headache, aches, soreness or redness at the injection site or mild sweating or shivering should all respond to **rest and paracetamol**.



The flu vaccine is very effective

Flu vaccination of health and care workers results in an up to **40% reduction in influenza-related patient deaths**.



The flu vaccine has been given to **millions** of people worldwide for over **60 years**.

