

Flu Vaccine

for Children aged 2 to 17



This is an Easy to Read Guide



What is this leaflet about?



This year, all children aged 2 to 17 will be offered the flu vaccine.



The vaccine and appointment with your child's doctor or pharmacist are free.

You do not have to pay.



This leaflet explains why it is important that children get the flu vaccine.



The flu vaccine for children is called Fluenz Tetra.

It is made by AstraZeneca.



This leaflet tells you where your child can get the flu vaccine.

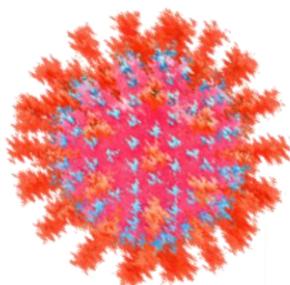


It gives you important information about the vaccine.

Please read the information carefully.



What is flu?



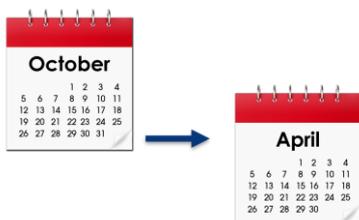
Flu is an illness that adults and children can get.

A virus gives you this illness.



A virus is a germ that can get into your body, give you an infection, and make you ill.

The flu virus can get into your nose, mouth, throat and lungs.



Flu can pass from one person to another.

It can spread in the community from October until the end of April.



How does flu affect children?



Children are more likely than adults to get very ill from flu.



Children who are sick with flu miss days in crèche, childcare and school.



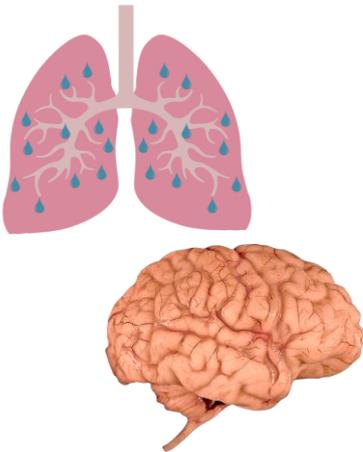
They also miss out on activities such as hobbies and sports.



Can flu make children very ill?



Yes, flu can make children very ill.



Children can get serious illnesses like pneumonia, bronchitis, or a swelling in the brain.



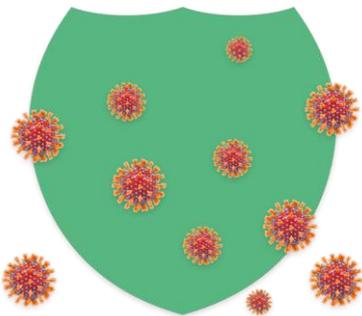
Children with long-term health problems have more chance of getting very ill from flu.



How will the flu vaccine protect my child?



The flu vaccine is the best way to keep your child safe from flu.

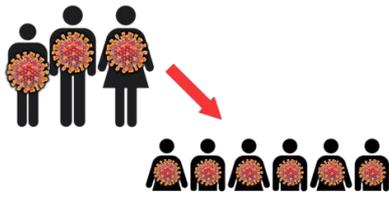


The vaccine helps your child's immune system to make antibodies.

Antibodies fight infection.



If your child comes into contact with the flu virus, the vaccine can stop them getting ill.



If my child gets the flu vaccine, are other people protected?



If your child gets the flu vaccine, it cuts down the spread to other people.



This helps protect the people around them. For example, their brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents.



If enough children get the flu vaccine, less people will need to go to hospital with flu.

This is very important for our health services, especially during COVID-19.



How is the flu vaccine given?



Your doctor or pharmacist will give the vaccine as a spray.



This spray goes up your child's nose.
They will spray once in each nostril.

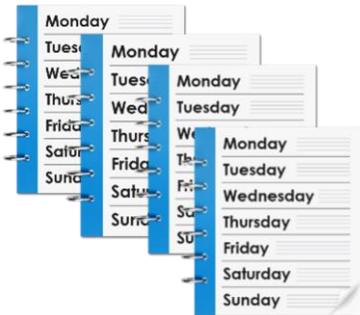


There is no injection and your child will not feel any pain.



Your child can breathe normally while getting the vaccine.

There is no need to take a deep breath or sniff.



Some children with long-term health problems may need two doses of the vaccine.

These are given four weeks apart.



If your child cannot get the nasal spray flu vaccine, they can get a different flu vaccine.

Your doctor or pharmacist can give this.

This is an injection.



The flu vaccine cannot give your child the flu.



Can all children get the flu vaccine?



Most children, aged 2 to 17, can get the flu vaccine.



The nasal flu vaccine can only be given to children from 2 years of age.



If your child is over 17, they cannot get the nasal flu vaccine.



Most children with an egg allergy can get the flu vaccine.



Most children with asthma can get the flu vaccine.



Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if your child is under 2 or over 17 and has a long-term health problem.



Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you need more information.



Are there any children that should not get the flu vaccine?



Children and young people should not get the flu vaccine if:



- they have had a serious allergic reaction to a flu vaccine or any of its ingredients before



- they have severe asthma
they have been wheezy and needed their inhaler more in the 3 days before the vaccine



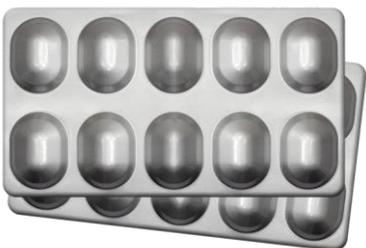
- they are taking medicines which have aspirin in them



- they have a very weak immune system because of illness or treatments



- they live with someone who has a very weak immune system



- they are taking certain medicines which are used to treat cancer. These are called combination checkpoint inhibitors



- they have an illness called severe neutropenia.
This is low levels of a type of white blood cell



- they have taken special medicine for flu in the 48 hours before the vaccine.
This is called antiviral medication



- they have an illness which means fluid leaks from their brain and spinal cord



- they are pregnant



Talk to your doctor before getting the nasal flu vaccine for your child if they have had a cochlear implant.



What are the side effects of the flu vaccine?



The flu vaccine is a very safe vaccine.
Serious reactions do not happen very often.



The most common side effects are mild.
The side effects are a runny or blocked nose, headache, and muscle aches.



Some children get a temperature after the vaccine.
This is usually mild and goes away on its own.



What if my child is not well after the flu vaccine?



If your child has a temperature or a headache, you can give them paracetamol or ibuprofen.



Do not give aspirin or medicines called salicylates to children unless your doctor tells you to.

This is very important in the 4 weeks after they get the vaccine.



Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if your child is very ill after the vaccine.

They might be ill for some other reason.

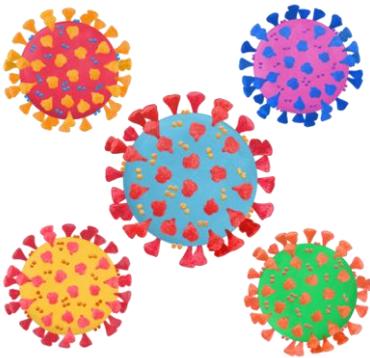


Will the flu vaccine keep my child safe from COVID-19?



No, the flu vaccine does not protect your child against COVID-19.

It is important they get both the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine.



This is because flu and COVID-19 are caused by different viruses.



Your child can get a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as the flu vaccine.



How can I get more information?



You can read more about the vaccine at www.hse.ie/flu



You can also find a link to the patient information leaflet for the vaccine at www.hpra.ie
Look for Fluenz Tetra.



You can also talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or vaccinator.

HSE Version 1

October 2022

