



Seasonal flu, immunisation and what you should be thinking about now

Why protect your pupils and staff from seasonal flu?

- Seasonal flu is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. It occurs every year, usually in the winter.
- People sometimes think of flu as a bad cold but having flu is often much worse. You may be so ill that you are unable to do much more than stay in bed.
- Some people are more vulnerable to the effects of seasonal flu. Flu can make existing conditions worse or can increase the risk of developing more serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia. In the worst cases, seasonal flu can result in a stay in hospital, or even death.
- If pupils or staff catch flu, it is highly likely to spread rapidly to others within the school. This will challenge the day to day service delivery in the school as affected staff will be unable to work and pupils will be absent from school for several days.

Who should get the vaccine?

The following groups should have seasonal flu vaccination every year:

- those aged 65 years or over
- those who live in a residential or nursing home
- front line health care workers, including those who work in care homes
- the carer of an older or disabled person
- pregnant women
- 2 to 3 year olds (from 1st September 2013)

In addition, the following staff and pupils, even if they are otherwise healthy, should definitely have the free seasonal flu vaccination if they have:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a heart problem• a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis or emphysema, asthma that requires continuous or repeated use of inhaled or systemic steroids, cystic fibrosis• had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)• diabetes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a problem with the spleen for example, sickle cell disease, or the spleen has been removed a kidney disease• lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment)• a neurological condition, for example multiple sclerosis (MS) or cerebral palsy• a liver disease |
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This list is not exhaustive. If you are unsure if your staff or pupils fall into any of these risk groups then please ensure the GP or School Nurse is consulted.

Where can I get more information for my staff and pupils?

Further information and web links

The green book chapter online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/series/annual-flu-programme>

Where can I get more information for pupils and staff if there is flu like illness at the school?

If there is flu like illness at the school, report this to your local Health Protection Team on the numbers below without delay. The team will give you for further advice:

If in Kent and Medway - 0844 225 7968 OR if in Surrey Sussex - 0845 894 2944