

Dorset School Age Immunisations Service

Acorn Building
 St Leonards Hospital
 Ringwood Road
 Dorset
 BH24 2DW
 Tel: 01425 891162

e-mail: dhc.immsenquiries@nhs.net

Service Operating Hours Mon-Fri 09:00 - 17:00

29 November 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

FLU VACCINATION OFFER TO CHILDREN IN YEAR 7 TO YEAR 9

We are pleased to confirm that the flu vaccination will be offered in schools this Autumn/Winter to help protect your child. Flu can be an unpleasant illness and sometimes causes serious complications. Vaccinating your child will also protect more vulnerable friends and family by preventing the spread of flu. With COVID-19 still in circulation it is important to reduce the number of those becoming ill with flu this winter to help protect them, the NHS and social care. Research also shows that if you get both flu and COVID-19 at the same time you may be more seriously ill.

Details regarding the vaccination session for your child's school are as follows:

School	Poole High School
Date of session	Friday 27 January 2023
Unique Session Code	6buzmh
Complete online consent form no later than	Tuesday 24 January 2023

If the form is submitted too late for us to be able to do this, your child will not be able to be immunised at school, and you will need to make a clinic appointment in a community venue instead.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING ONLINE CONSENT

- Please complete the online consent form using the following link:
<https://links.inhealthcare.co.uk/dorset-flu>

This service is provided on behalf of Dorset HealthCare by InHealthCare

- InHealthCare will send a verification code to your email address, to ensure we have your correct details.
- You will be asked a series of health questions for your child. There is space to add further information if your child has a health condition or additional needs.
- We will contact you if we require any further information. Please provide a daytime telephone number if possible.
- If you miss the deadline you can still complete a form but will be offered an appointment for a catch-up clinic at a community venue.
- If you decide you do not want your child to be vaccinated against flu, there is space on the consent form for you to complete and please do tell us why.

If you have any problems completing the online consent form, please check our website: www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/schoolageimms and complete the Contact Us form. For any other queries regarding your child's vaccination, please e-mail us at dhc.immsenquiries@nhs.net or phone us on 01425 891162.

The vaccination is free and is a quick and simple spray up the nose. Even if your child had it last year, it is recommended to have the flu vaccine again this year as the strains included vary from year to year.

A leaflet explaining the vaccination programme is attached to this email / available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-leaflets-and-posters/protect-yourself-against-flu-information-for-those-in-secondary-school>

and includes details about the small number of children for whom the nasal vaccine is not appropriate.

If your child is unable to have the nasal flu vaccination, we will contact you to discuss your child having the flu injection at a community clinic instead.

Since the programme was introduced, most children offered the vaccine in schools have had the immunisation.

Yours faithfully

Dorset School Age Immunisation Service

For further information see: www.nhs.uk/child-flu



UK Health
Security
Agency



Protect yourself against flu

Flu immunisation in England

Information for those in secondary school



Flu  mmunisation

Helping to protect you against flu

Flu vaccine is offered free to:

Children aged
2 or 3 years old

(on 31 August before
flu vaccinations start
in the autumn)



All primary
school-aged
children

Some secondary
school-aged
children



Children with a
health condition
that puts them
at greater risk
from flu

Further information on which children are eligible each year can be found at: www.nhs.uk/child-flu

Why should I have the flu vaccine?

Flu can be a very unpleasant illness causing fever, stuffy nose, dry cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints, and extreme tiredness. This can last several days or more. Some people develop complications and need to go to hospital for treatment.

What are the benefits of the vaccine?

Having the vaccine will help protect you from what can be a very nasty illness. It can help you avoid having to miss out on the things you enjoy and disruption to your education.

Why are so many young people being offered the vaccine?

The vaccine will help protect you against flu and reduces the chance of you spreading flu to others so in turn helps protect your family and friends.

It will help to reduce flu levels in the population in the winter when there may be pressure on the NHS with COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses in circulation.

I had the flu vaccination last year. Do I need another one this year?

Yes; flu viruses change every year so the vaccine may be updated. For this reason, we recommend that you are vaccinated against flu again this year, even if vaccinated last year.

How will the vaccine be given?

It is usually given as a nasal spray.

So how does the nasal spray work?

The nasal spray contains viruses that have been weakened to prevent them from causing flu but will help you to build up immunity.

The vaccine is absorbed quickly in the nose so, even if you sneeze immediately after having had the spray, there's no need to worry that it hasn't worked.

Are there any side-effects of the vaccine?

You may develop a runny or blocked nose, headache, general tiredness and some loss of appetite. However, these are much less serious than developing flu and its complications. Serious side-effects are uncommon.

What if I am not feeling well on the day?

The vaccination may be delayed if you have a fever. Also, if you have a heavily blocked or runny nose, it might stop the vaccine getting into your system. In this case, the flu vaccination can be postponed until your nasal symptoms have cleared up. Sometimes an injected vaccine may be offered instead.



What about those young people who have a long-term health condition?

If you have a health condition that puts you at higher risk of serious complications from flu, you should have the flu vaccine every year. If you have one of these health conditions and are not in one of the groups being offered flu vaccine at school, you can also ask your GP surgery to give you the vaccine. You can also ask your GP surgery to do this if, for example, you don't want to wait until the school vaccination session.

Long term health conditions that put you more at risk from flu

These conditions include:

- serious breathing problems, such as asthma needing regular use of steroid inhaler or tablets
- serious heart conditions
- kidney or liver disease
- diabetes
- weakened immune system as a result of a condition or treatment with medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- problems with the spleen, for example, sickle cell disease, or the spleen has been removed
- learning disability
- problems with the nervous system, such as cerebral palsy



Visit www.nhs.uk/child-flu for more information

Are there any young people who shouldn't have the nasal vaccine?

The nasal spray vaccine is offered to young people as it is more effective in the programme than the injected vaccine. However, some young people with long term health conditions may not be able to have the nasal vaccine (see details below). Your parents will be given a consent form to complete ahead of the vaccination, which will include questions to check whether it is suitable for you. They can speak with the school immunisation team if they have any questions. If you cannot have the nasal spray, you will be offered an injectable flu vaccine.

Who shouldn't have the nasal vaccine?

Instead of the nasal spray vaccine, you should have an injected flu vaccine if you:

- are currently wheezy or have been wheezy in the past 72 hours
- have a very weakened immune system or someone in your household needs isolation because they are severely immunosuppressed
- have a condition that needs salicylate treatment
- have had an anaphylactic reaction to a flu vaccine, or any of the components, in the past (other than egg)

Young people who have been vaccinated with the nasal spray should avoid close contact with people with very severely weakened immune systems (for example those who have just had a bone marrow transplant) for around 2 weeks following vaccination. If contact is likely or unavoidable then an alternative flu vaccine should be given.

If you're not sure, check with the school immunisation team, or the nurse or GP at your surgery.

Your parents should seek the advice of your specialist, if you have:

- had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to egg in the past that required intensive care treatment
- asthma that's being treated with steroid tablets or required intensive care treatment in hospital

Does the nasal vaccine contain gelatine derived from pigs (porcine gelatine)?

Yes. The nasal vaccine contains a highly processed form of gelatine (porcine gelatine), which is used in a range of many essential medicines. The gelatine helps to keep the vaccine viruses stable so that the vaccine provides the best protection against flu.

The nasal vaccine is offered to children and young people as it is more effective in the programme than the injected vaccine. This is because it is easier to administer and considered better at reducing the spread of flu to others, who may be more vulnerable to the complications of flu. However, if you are at high risk from flu due to one or more medical conditions or treatments and can't have the nasal flu vaccine you should have the flu vaccine by injection. For those who may not accept the use of porcine gelatine in medical products, an alternative injectable vaccine is available. Your parents should discuss the options with the school immunisation team.

5 reasons to have the flu vaccine

1. Protect yourself.

The vaccine will help protect you against flu and serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia

2. Protect your family and friends.

Having the vaccine will help protect more vulnerable friends and family

3. No injection needed.

The nasal spray is painless and easy to have

4. It's better than having flu.

The nasal spray helps protect against flu, has been given to millions worldwide and has an excellent safety record

5. Avoid lost opportunities.

If you get flu, you may be unwell for several days and not be able to do the things you enjoy

Where can I get more information?

Visit www.nhs.uk/child-flu for more information. Talk to the school immunisation team, your GP, or practice nurse if you have any further questions.



www.nhs.uk/vaccinations