



FLU VACCINATION SERVICE

Want to avoid feeling under the weather this winter? The Flu Vaccine is a safe, effective way to help prevent flu during the winter season.

It's your best shot.

care⁺PLUS
PHARMACY



WHAT IS SEASONAL FLU (INFLUENZA) AND ITS SYMPTOMS?

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a common and highly infectious respiratory illness caused by the Influenza virus that infects the nose, throat and lungs. It can range from mild to severe and can have serious complications.

Fever, cough, headache, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose along with all over muscle and body aches and extreme fatigue are all symptoms that can be associated with the flu.

It affects people of all ages and is usually more prevalent in the winter months.

WHAT IS THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Every flu season is different as the circulating flu virus strains change every year. This is why a new flu vaccine is needed every year. This year's flu vaccine will be made available in two presentations depending on age and certain criteria.

1. Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (Inactive injectable vaccine)

2. Fluenz Tetra Intranasal Spray (Live attenuated nasal suspension)

The flu vaccine stimulates your body's immune system to produce antibodies to attack the flu virus. Once you have been vaccinated with the flu vaccine and come into contact with the flu virus, your immune system will recognise the virus and produce these antibodies to fight it.

The live attenuated flu vaccine contains live attenuated viruses, it mimics natural infection, which induces more durable immune memory (thereby offering better long-term protection to children than inactivated influenza vaccine)

On foot of the governments call for everyone to get vaccinated this year they have declared all children aged 2-12 years can avail of a free flu vaccine.

As of mid-December 2020, Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly confirmed that, eligibility for Fluenz Tetra Nasal Spray Vaccination (LAIV) has been extended to include 13-17-year olds, regardless of risk. The nasal vaccine is now available under the Free HSE vaccination programme for 2-17 years inclusive. The vaccination for this age group will be a live attenuated influenza vaccine administered intranasally (where suitable).



Most children need only one dose of the vaccine each year, In certain circumstances children may need a second dose of the vaccine, and those doses are given four weeks apart.

Talk to our CarePlus Pharmacist for more advice.

WHO SHOULD GET THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE?

It is recommended that everyone from 6 months onwards should get vaccinated this flu season, with a few exceptions.

This is particularly important for the following groups:


- Children aged **2 years to 12 year**
- Anybody aged **65 years** and over
- **Pregnant women** (flu vaccine is safe at any stage of pregnancy)
- Anybody (adults and children) with long-term medical conditions such as **diabetes; chronic heart, liver and kidney disease; chronic lung disease including COPD, or neurological diseases**
- Anybody with **cancer**
- Anybody whose **immune system is impaired** due to disease or treatment, including family members
- Anybody who is **obese who have a body mass index (BMI) of over 40**
- Anybody with **Down syndrome**
- Residents of **nursing homes** and other **long-stay institutions**
- **Healthcare workers**
- **Carers and household contacts** of people at increased risk of flu because of medical conditions
- Anybody with regular close contact **with poultry, waterfowl or pigs**

WHO SHOULD **NOT** GET THE INJECTABLE INACTIVATED FLU VACCINE?

- Anybody with a history of a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of flu vaccine or any part of the vaccine
- Anybody taking medicines called combination checkpoint inhibitors (e.g. ipilimumab plus nivolumab) should not receive the flu vaccine because of a possible risk of immune reactions
- Anybody with an egg or chicken protein allergy must see their GP to be vaccinated or may need to be referred to a hospital specialist
- Anybody unwell with a high temperature of more than 38°C, vaccination will have to be postponed
- Anybody who has had a bilateral mastectomy must see their GP to be vaccinated or may need to be referred to a hospital specialist

WHO SHOULD **NOT** GET THE LIVE ATTENUATED NASAL SPRAY FLU VACCINE?

- Any child with a severely weakened immune system
- Any child with a severe egg allergy with anaphylaxis that is led to intensive care hospital admission
- Any child with severe asthma, that is, those being treated with steroid tablets or who have needed intensive care because of their asthma
- Any child who is currently wheezy or have been wheezy in the past 72 hours
- Any child with an allergy to any of the vaccine ingredients, such as neomycin a condition that requires salicylate (aspirin) treatment

A close-up photograph of a young child with blonde hair and bangs. The child's eyes are closed, and they are holding a white tissue to their nose. An adult's hands are visible, gently holding the child's hands and the tissue. The background is a soft, out-of-focus pinkish-purple color.

WHEN SHOULD YOU GET THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE?

The flu season starts at the beginning of October and lasts until the end of April. You can get the vaccine at any time during the flu season.

It is recommended to get the vaccine at the start of the flu season, at the beginning of October.

To give you the most protection from catching the flu, you should get the seasonal flu vaccine every year.

WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT AFTER VACCINATION?

The injectable inactivated flu vaccine

- It may take 10 to 14 days for your immunity to build up fully after you have had the flu vaccine. You will be protected about 2 weeks after being vaccinated
- Being vaccinated is likely to provide effective protection against this year's seasonal influenza strain. However, there is a small chance of you catching the flu if you have been pre-exposed
- The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu as there is no live virus in the vaccine
- Reactions to the vaccine are generally mild and serious side effects are very rare

The live attenuated nasal spray flu vaccine

- The viruses in nasal spray flu vaccines are weakened and do not cause the severe symptoms often associated with the flu virus.
- It takes up to two weeks after vaccination for the body to start developing protection against flu and can protect up to 2/3 of children who receive the vaccine from getting the flu virus.
- Reactions to the vaccine are generally mild and serious side effects are very rare



ARE THERE POSSIBLE SIDE-EFFECTS?

The injectable inactivated flu vaccine

The majority of people do not have any problems after receiving the seasonal injectable flu vaccine. However, occasionally people develop side effects after being vaccinated. Most of the side effects are not serious, will disappear on their own and do not last long.

The most common side effects are mild and include:

- **Skin reactions such as soreness, redness, swelling and bruising at the injection site**
- **Headache, fever, aches, pains and fatigue can occur**
- **Feeling unwell, mild sweating and shivering which will pass. This is your immune system responding to the vaccine**

Serious reactions are very rare. You should seek medical advice if you experience any of these symptoms:

- **Severe allergic reactions**
- **Nerve pain and inflammation**
- **Numbness, tingling, fits**

Other rare but serious reactions may include thrombocytopenia (blood disorder), vasculitis (inflammation of the blood vessels) or rare nerve disorders.

The live attenuated nasal spray flu vaccine

The viruses in nasal spray flu vaccines are weakened and do not cause the severe symptoms often associated with the flu virus.

The most common side effects are mild and include:

- **Runny or blocked nose**
- **Headache**
- **Fever**
- **General tiredness**
- **Loss of appetite**

If these problems occur, they are usually mild and go away on their own, but serious reactions are also possible. The vast majority of people who receive the flu vaccine have no serious problems with it.

Serious reactions are very rare. You should seek medical advice if you experience any of these symptoms:

- **Hypersensitivity reactions (including facial oedema, urticaria and very rare anaphylactic reactions)**
- **Difficulty breathing/ shortness of breath**
- **Nerve pain and inflammation**
- **Numbness, tingling, fits**

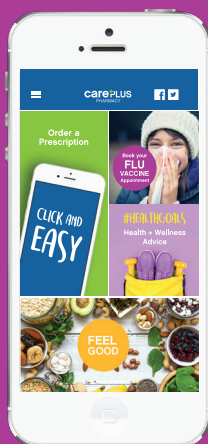


HOW CAN WE HELP?

Your CarePlus Pharmacist can provide the flu vaccination in our private consultation room in the Pharmacy.

For immunocompromised patients, we advise you to call your local CarePlus Pharmacist ahead of your visit to ensure we can fully attend to your needs.

HOW TO BOOK



Talk to a member of our team
to book your appointment or
book through our **CarePlus App**

Download the App for free on
the App Store or Google Play



careplus.ie