

## **Facts about flu and the flu vaccine**

### **Flu kills**

Public Health England estimated that an average 8,000 people die from flu in England each year. Some years that figure reaches 14,000.

### **You can spread flu with no symptoms**

A study indicates up to 77 per cent of people with flu have no symptoms so you could still be passing on the virus to vulnerable people, family and friends without even knowing it.

### **Flu is much worse than a heavy cold**

A bad bout of flu is much worse than a heavy cold. Flu symptoms come on suddenly and sometimes severely. They include fever, chills, headaches and aching muscles, as well as a cough and sore throat. You're likely to spend 2 or 3 days in bed. If you get complications caused by flu, you could become seriously ill and have to go to hospital.

### **The flu vaccine can't give you flu**

The injected flu vaccine given to adults contains inactivated flu viruses, so it can't give you flu. Your arm may feel a bit sore where you were injected, and some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards. Other reactions are very rare.

To find out more how the flu vaccine visit [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) and search 'flu'

### **You need to have the flu vaccine every year**

The viruses that cause flu can change every year, so you need a vaccination that matches the new viruses each year. The vaccine usually provides protection for the duration of that year's flu season.

### **If you are pregnant you should have the flu vaccine**

You should have the vaccine no matter what stage of pregnancy you're at. If you're pregnant, you could get very ill if you get flu, which could also be bad for your baby.

Having the vaccine can also protect your baby against flu after they're born and during the early months of life.

### **Even if you think you've had flu, you should still have the vaccination**

If you're in one of the "at risk" groups you should still get the vaccine.

As flu is caused by several viruses, the immunity you naturally developed will only protect you against one of them – you could go on to catch another strain, so it's recommended you have the vaccine even if you've recently had flu. Also, what you thought was flu could have been something else.

### **It's not too late to have the flu vaccine**

You should take up the offer of the flu vaccine when it becomes available, with the best time to have it from the beginning of October to the end of November. Don't worry if you have still have missed it, you can still have it after this time.