IF YOU KNEW ABOUT FLU YOU'D GET THE JAB

GET THE RIGHT TREATMENT.
Let’s beat flu

As we get older, we tend to get a bit more vulnerable to viruses like the flu. Something that we might have shaken off quite easily in our younger days can now land us in hospital and leave us open to really serious illnesses like bronchitis and pneumonia.

That’s why it pays to get your flu jab in the autumn before flu starts to circulate. The jab is free, and it helps protect against the latest strains of the virus.
And the flu jab isn’t just for those aged 65 years and over. Many younger people, especially those with heart, chest or kidney conditions or other health problems can also benefit.

So make an appointment with your GP today. And make sure you come out on top in the fight against flu this winter.
How do I know when I’ve got flu?

Flu symptoms hit you suddenly and severely. They usually include fever, chills, headaches and aching muscles, and you can often get a cough and sore throat at the same time.

Isn’t flu just a heavy cold?
No. Colds are much less severe and usually start gradually with a sore throat and stuffy or runny nose.

How serious is flu?
Catching flu is a nasty experience for most people. But it can also lead to really serious illnesses like bronchitis and pneumonia, which may mean you need hospital treatment. A lot of people, mainly the elderly, still die from influenza every winter.

How do I catch flu?
Flu is a highly infectious illness, which spreads very rapidly by coughs and sneezes from people who are already carrying the virus.

When am I most at risk from flu?
Influenza reappears every winter, usually over a short period of a few weeks, so that a lot of people get ill around the same time. In a really bad year, this can amount to an epidemic, but it’s impossible to predict how much flu there’ll be every year.
Don't wait until there's an epidemic: contact your GP or practice nurse and get your flu jab this autumn before the virus appears in the winter.

Who needs a flu jab?
Ask your GP about having a flu vaccination if:

- you're 65 or over

or if you have any of these problems (however old you are):

- a chronic heart or chest complaint, including asthma
- chronic kidney disease
- diabetes
- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment such as steroid medication or cancer treatment.

If you live in a residential care home, talk to your nurse or the manager.

If you are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person then you should ensure that they are vaccinated (if recommended) and also seek advice from your GP as to whether you should be vaccinated so that you can continue to look after the person.

If I had the jab last year, do I need it again now?
Yes. The viruses which cause flu change every year, which means the flu this winter will be different from last winter's, and the vaccine will be different as well.

Why shouldn't everyone have a flu jab?
Healthy people don't need to be vaccinated - for them flu is uncomfortable but is not usually as serious.

How long will the jab protect me?
The vaccine provides protection for about a year.
How does the vaccine work?
Your body starts making antibodies to the vaccine virus about a week to ten days after the injection. The antibodies help protect you against any similar viruses you then come into contact with.

Will it stop me from getting ill?
Flu vaccinations only protect against flu; they won’t stop you catching the many other viruses that appear every winter. But because flu is generally more serious, it makes sense to have a flu jab.

FIGHT FLU THIS WINTER

Can the flu jab actually cause flu?
No. The vaccine doesn’t contain any live virus, so it can’t cause flu.

Will there be any side effects?
Side effects should be expected. Some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards and your arm may feel a bit sore where you were injected, but that’s about all. Any other reactions are very rare.

How effective is the vaccine?
No vaccine is 100% effective. Most people who’ve been vaccinated will not get the flu. If you do catch flu, it’s likely to be milder than if you hadn’t been vaccinated.

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BOOK YOUR FLU JAB TODAY

When are flu vaccines given?
The best time is between September and early November, ready for the winter. Don’t wait until there’s a flu epidemic.

Is there anyone who shouldn’t get a flu jab?
If you have a serious allergy to hens’ eggs, you shouldn’t get vaccinated. If in doubt, ask your doctor.

Can I have the flu vaccine if I am pregnant?
Yes. If you are in one of the risk groups mentioned above, talk to your GP about this. No problems have been reported in giving the vaccine to pregnant women.

How do I go about getting immunised?
If you think you need a flu vaccination, check with your doctor or the practice nurse – or if a nurse visits you regularly, you can ask them. Alternatively ask your local pharmacist. Most doctors organise special vaccination sessions in the autumn.

IT’S SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

Are you aged 75 or over?
You can now also have the pneumo jab to protect you against serious forms of pneumococcal infection. You won’t need it each year – for most it’s a one-off vaccination. If you haven’t already been sent an appointment and would like more information, contact your local surgery. It is safe to have the pneumo jab at the same time as your flu jab.