Winter protection and flu vaccination – Key messages

Each winter, respiratory viruses like flu and other infections circulate simultaneously, placing significant strain on the NHS and adult social care.

The flu vaccine offers protection against flu, a highly infectious illness that is especially common during winter. Unlike a cold, flu symptoms often appear suddenly and can be severe. Flu can lead to serious complications, including hospitalisation, long-term health problems, and, for vulnerable individuals, even death. The vaccine helps protect against the main types of circulating flu virus and reduces serious illness and hospital admissions Source: UKHSA Winter Vaccines Communications Toolkit 2026-2027

Last winter the flu vaccination programme prevented an estimated 100,000 hospital admissions and 7,000 deaths.
Source: Influenza in the UK, annual epidemiological report: winter 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK

Key points:

- Flu spreads more easily in winter when we spend more time together indoors, and it can cause serious illness, especially for vulnerable people.
- You can be infected with the virus and have mild or no symptoms, but you can still pass the flu virus to others.
- It is important to get protected, even if you have had a vaccine or been ill with flu before, as immunity fades over time and these viruses change each year.
- If you are vaccinated and catch flu this winter, you are likely to have milder symptoms and recover faster, cutting your risk of being hospitalised.

How to Book:

Book your NHS flu vaccination using the NHS National Booking Service

You can also book an appointment over the phone. You can call **119** free of charge if you cannot book online. You can speak to an interpreter if you need to.

Further information about the flu vaccine, including detailed eligibility criteria can be found on the NHS website: Flu vaccine - NHS

Lancashire County Council
PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD