



Protecting children and young people with learning disabilities against flu



This year children and young people with learning disabilities are being offered a vaccine against flu

1. Why are children and young people being offered the flu vaccine?

- Flu can be a very unpleasant illness in children and young people causing fever, stuffy nose, dry cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints and extreme tiredness often last for several days. Some children and young people can also get a very high fever, sometimes without the usual flu symptoms, and may need to go to hospital for treatment. Complications of flu can include bronchitis, pneumonia, and a painful ear infection that may be severe.



2. What are the benefits of the vaccine?

- Having a vaccine will help protect your child or young person from what can be a very nasty illness and reduce the chance of others in your family getting it. You will also avoid having to take time off work because you are ill or looking after your sick child or young person.



3. How will the vaccine be given?

- For most children and young people the flu vaccination is given as a nasal spray up each nostril.

4. Who will give my child the flu vaccination?

- It will be given by your GP surgery, most probably by the nurse.

5. How does the new nasal vaccine work?

- The nasal vaccine contains viruses that have been weakened to prevent them from causing flu to still allow a child or young person to build up immunity, so when they come in to contact with the seasonal flu virus they are very unlikely to get ill.



6. Are there any side effects of the vaccine?

- Some common side effects are headache, runny or blocked nose, general tiredness and some loss of appetite. The vaccine is absorbed quickly so there is no need to worry it hasn't worked even if your child or young person sneezes immediately after having the spray.



7. Are there any children or young people who shouldn't have the nasal vaccine?

- Children and young people shouldn't have the vaccine if they are:
 - Severely asthmatic
 - Wheezy on the vaccination day
 - Allergic to eggs or any part of the vaccine or have a condition that severely weakens their immune system.

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

The nasal vaccine contains a highly processed form of gelatine (derived from pigs), which is used in a range of many essential medicines. The nasal vaccine provides the best protection against flu, particularly in young children.

This nasal vaccine not only protects your child against disease but, if enough children are vaccinated the disease won't spread from one person to another, and so their friends and family are also protected.

For more information go to <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/Pages/Introduction.aspx>