

Influenza infection and vaccination

How does influenza affect me?

- Influenza causes fever and body pain.
- Older people are more likely to also get a chest infection and need to go to hospital if they get influenza.

How does the influenza vaccine help?

- Getting the vaccine makes it less likely that you will get a chest infection or need to go to hospital.
- The vaccine may not stop you from getting influenza BUT it will protect you from becoming very unwell.

When can I get the free influenza vaccine?

- 65 years and older

What are common side effects of the influenza vaccine?

- 1 in 10 people may have swelling or pain at the injection site for 2 to 3 days.
- Paracetamol can help with this pain.
- Sometimes a lump may happen at the injection site and last for a few weeks or months – no treatment is needed.
- People can also get fever, headache and muscle ache after the vaccine but these go away after 2 to 3 days. Some people mistake these for influenza infection but these side effects are much less severe than the infection.
- 1 in one million people who get the vaccine may have a problem with their nerves. This is generally temporary and can also happen in people who get influenza.

Can the influenza vaccine give me influenza?

- No. The vaccine cannot give you influenza because there is no live virus in the vaccine.

Why do I need an influenza vaccination every year?

- The strain of influenza virus changes every year, so you need a new vaccine every year to protect you.

Should I still get the influenza vaccine after I have the infection?

- Yes. You are less likely to get sick from other strains of the virus if you get the vaccine.
- Wait until you are better before you get the vaccine.

Where can I get more information?

- Speak to your GP.
- Frequently asked questions on influenza vaccines are also available (in English only) – please scan the QR code:

