

NHS Lothian Primary School Flu Vaccination Programme 2016/17

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents / Carers

Q1. When do I need to return my consent form by and why is it important?

A1. You need to complete and return your consent form as soon as possible, as indicated in the letter in the consent form pack. Fully completing the questions, signing and returning your consent form is important in getting your child immunised. You need to return your consent form even if your decision for your child is not to receive the vaccine. The consent form is your formal response that you have made an informed decision to have/or not have your child immunised against flu. The consent form includes the information that the NHS team needs in order to decide whether your child is eligible to receive the nasal spray (or injectable) form of the vaccine. If you do not return your completed consent form within the timescale provided, your child might not get immunised. Please remember to both tick **and** sign the consent section of the form. Please also provide a day time telephone number where you can be contacted by the NHS team if required.

Q2. I am unsure about how to complete the consent form. What can I do?

A2. It is vital that the consent form is fully completed and the consent section is **both ticked and signed**. Vaccination will not be able to be given to your child if the form is incomplete. Schools will have a copy of guidance to assist with completing the consent form. If you are still having difficulty with any of the questions please contact the Community Vaccination Team on 0131 446 4082.

Q3. I've lost my consent form / pack for flu vaccination for my child or I can't remember if I have returned it. What can I do?

A3. Please contact your child's school to ask for a replacement – please note that this will be a blank form so **all** of your child's details will need to be completed.

Q4. When will my child get the vaccine?

A4. Most children will be immunised in October, November or December. The sessions will take place in school.

Q5. I don't know when my child's school is scheduled to have the vaccination session. How do I find out?

A5. Schools will know the session date however we leave it at the discretion of the school about giving information on this. It should be noted that dates can change for a number of reasons.

Q6. I completed the consent form for my child to have the flu vaccination but I have changed my mind and no longer wish my child to have the vaccination. What should I do?

A6. Please contact the Community Vaccination Team on 0131 446 4082 and **also** confirm that you are withdrawing your consent in writing to the Health Board at the address in the letter which came with the consent form pack.

Please do not hand notes to the school office, withdrawal **must** be communicated to the Community Vaccination Team both by telephone **and** in writing one week prior to the vaccination session.

Q7. How will the vaccine be given?

A7. For most children, the flu vaccine is given as a nasal (nose) spray into each nostril. It is not an injection. It's quick, and it's painless. There's no need to sniff or inhale the vaccine; only a tiny amount is sprayed into each nostril. A film of the flu vaccine being given to children in school is available on: <http://www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/vaccines-and-diseases/seasonalflu/childflu.aspx>

An alternative form of the flu vaccine may be suitable for children who cannot have the nasal spray vaccine. These children will be offered a flu vaccine as an injection in the upper arm. This will not be offered at school. Most GP Practices will offer this – please contact your GP to arrange this.

Q8. Are there any reasons why my child shouldn't have the nasal (nose) spray vaccine?

A8. Most children are able to have the nasal (nose) spray form of the vaccine. For further details please refer to the information leaflet in the consent form pack or go to the Immunisation Scotland website at <http://www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/vaccines-and-diseases/seasonalflu/childflu.aspx>

Exacerbation of wheezing 48-72hrs before immunisation or worsening of any asthmatic symptoms should be reported to the Community Vaccination Team on 0131 446 4082. A nurse will advise you if the immunisation should be deferred.

Q9. My child has a medical condition and previously would have attended the GP Practice for flu vaccination early in the season. Can I still arrange this at my GP Practice?

A9. Children with medical conditions will be vaccinated at scheduled school sessions. If a school vaccination session is **late** in the season, a parent who has a child with a **medical condition** may, in this circumstance, approach their GP Practice for an earlier vaccination. Please note that this circumstance **only** applies to children with a medical condition. **It is most important that if your GP does administer the vaccination for your child that you notify the Community Vaccination Team on 0131 446 4082 that this has taken place.**

Q10. Does my child only require one vaccination?

A10. In **most** cases **only one vaccination is required**. Please see the flu vaccination information leaflet for further detail and discuss with your GP if required.

Q11. Where can I find out more information about the childhood flu vaccination?

A11. Please refer to the information leaflet in the consent form pack or go to the Immunisation Scotland website at <http://www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/vaccines-and-diseases/seasonalflu/childflu.aspx>

Q12. My child missed the flu vaccination due to being ill / absent from / not in school. Will they still be able to get the vaccination?

A12. If your child is very unwell (for example, with a fever, diarrhoea or vomiting), or is severely asthmatic or wheezy, they should not have the vaccine.

An opportunity for those who are eligible but have missed the vaccination in school will be offered via most GP practices **after** the scheduled school session has passed - please contact your GP practice to arrange an appointment **after** the school session has taken place.

Q13. Why are healthy children being offered the flu vaccine?

A13. Flu is a disease that spreads rapidly, potentially causing widespread illness, especially in those who are already vulnerable because of their age or medical condition. So, if children are vaccinated against flu they will not only benefit directly from being protected themselves; they will also reduce the spread of flu and help protect the whole population. In particular, they will help to protect those children and adults who cannot or do not have the vaccine. This includes children under the age of two and children with illnesses like severe asthma who can become very unwell but who cannot have the vaccine because it is not suitable.

Q14. I've heard the vaccine is live. Does this mean my child will get flu?

A14. The virus in the vaccine has been weakened so that it doesn't cause flu. It helps your child build up immunity to flu, in the same way as a natural infection (but without the more severe symptoms). The flu vaccine will start to protect most children about 10 to 14 days after they receive their immunisation.

Q15. Is the vaccine safe?

A15 Before they are allowed to be used, all medicines (including vaccines) are tested for safety and effectiveness. Once they are in use, the safety of vaccines continues to be monitored.

Q16. Will the vaccine interfere with my child's natural immune system?

A16. No, the vaccine helps children to build up immunity in the same way as a natural infection with flu, but without the severe symptoms.

Q17. My child had the vaccine last year – do they need to have it again?

A17. Yes. The viruses that cause flu can change every year, which means the flu (and the vaccine) this winter may be different from last winter.

Q18. How long will the flu vaccine protect for?

A18. The flu vaccination will provide protection for the upcoming flu season. People eligible for flu vaccination should have the vaccine each year.

Q19. Does this vaccine contain pork gelatine?

A19. The nasal spray vaccine contains a small trace of pork gelatine. Gelatine is a common and essential ingredient in many medicines, including some vaccines. Many faith groups, including Muslim and Jewish communities, have approved the use of gelatine-containing vaccines. It is, however, an individual choice whether or not to receive the nasal spray vaccine and we recognise that there will be different opinions within different communities. The nasal spray is a more effective vaccine than the injection; however, those who choose not to have the nasal spray vaccine for religious reasons may request the injectable alternative which does not contain pork gelatine. This injectable vaccine would **not** be given at school, but can be requested from your GP practice.