



# Flu

## Living with a health condition?

### Fact:

4 in 10 of those  
hospitalised with flu have  
a health condition.

2019 edition

Trust the facts.  
**Get the vaccine.**

[www.flufacts.scot](http://www.flufacts.scot)



Healthier  
Scotland  
Scottish  
Government

## **Flu facts.**

- Influenza (flu) is a highly infectious disease that can hit anyone, with symptoms that come on very quickly.
- Every year in Scotland, two thirds of people who end up in intensive care because of flu have a health condition.
- People with a health condition are 18 times more likely to die from flu than those without a health condition.
- If you're aged 65 or over you also need extra protection because your immune system doesn't fight infection as well as you get older.

## **The vaccine is the best defence against flu.**

- Scotland's Chief Medical Officer recommends you have the free flu vaccine every year if you have a health condition or care for someone who does.
- You have to be immunised every year because the virus changes constantly and your immunity reduces over time.
- The vaccine contains no live viruses, so it can't give you or people around you flu.
- It takes around 10 days to work, so the sooner you get it the better.

# Who should have the vaccine?

**People with a health condition** are at greater risk from flu. Conditions and diseases which make flu more dangerous include:

- asthma
- bronchitis
- emphysema
- cystic fibrosis
- chronic heart disease
- chronic kidney failure
- multiple sclerosis
- liver problems
- diabetes
- asplenia (dysfunction of the spleen)
- being very overweight
- HIV infection
- stroke.

Anyone undergoing chemotherapy treatment, or anyone who is on medication that reduces their immunity are at highest risk and should also get immunised. In fact, people with a compromised immune system are over 50 times more likely than a healthy person to die from flu.

**If you're under 18** and have a health condition or care for someone who does, you should also get immunised. You may be eligible to have the vaccine as a nasal (nose) spray.

**If you provide care for someone**, you may also be eligible for the flu vaccine.

**Speak to your GP or nurse for more information.**

# Trust the facts. Get the vaccine.

The flu vaccine is available from October to March. The sooner you get it the better.

Contact your GP practice to make an appointment. It only takes a few minutes to get immunised and it'll help to keep you well over the winter.

**For more information:**

 [www.nhsinform.scot/flu](http://www.nhsinform.scot/flu)

 **NHS inform 0800 22 44 88**

This resource may also be made available on request in the following formats:



 [www.nhsinform.scot/flu](http://www.nhsinform.scot/flu) – Click Further Information

 **0131 314 5300**

 [nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net)

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