

Be wise, immunise – top up your protection against flu this winter!

The NHS is urging everyone at high risk from flu to "Be wise, immunise" by getting their flu vaccine this winter.

Every year, around 17 million people in England get a free flu vaccine. Last year, more than one million people in the North East and North Cumbria were vaccinated.

The flu vaccine is now available to all pregnant women, children aged 2 and 3, primary school kids, secondary school students in Years 7 to 11, and children over six months old with certain health conditions.

From 3 October, the vaccine will also be offered to people aged 65 and over, those aged 18 to 65 with certain health conditions, care home residents, carers, close contacts of people with weakened immune systems, and all frontline health and social care workers.

The Joint Committee on Vaccine and Immunisation (JCVI) have recommended these dates, as protection from the flu vaccine can reduce over time - so starting later ensures better protection during the peak flu season.

Dr Catherine Monaghan, medical director, NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), said, "This winter, we're asking everyone to 'Be wise, immunise' because flu is still a serious threat. The vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting seriously ill.

"For some people, flu can be very dangerous, so it's important that those most at risk get their vaccine. This not only protects them and their families but also helps reduce pressures on NHS services during winter."

Primary and secondary school children will receive the flu nasal spray at school. Parents are asked to sign and return the consent form as soon as possible.

Children aged 2-3, and people of any age with certain health conditions, can get the vaccine at their GP practice.

Pregnant women can receive theirs during routine antenatal appointments or at their GP practice.

All other eligible adults can book their vaccine appointment online, through the NHS App, or by calling 119 starting.

The NHS is also reminding people who are pregnant, or aged 75 to 79, to get the new **RSV vaccine**. This vaccine protects children and older adults from bronchiolitis and pneumonia.

If you're aged 75 to 79, your GP surgery will contact you about getting vaccinated. If you are 28 weeks pregnant or more, you can speak to your midwife or GP surgery about getting your RSV vaccination.

The COVID-19 vaccine will also be available to some people from 3 October.

For more information and to check your eligibility, visit [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk).

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