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| ***Flu vaccination is an easy way to stay well this winter*** *In this special edition of Your Health, NHS Choices explains who is entitled to a free flu vaccine. The vaccine is available every year on the NHS to help protect adults and children at risk of flu and its complications.**Flu vaccination is particularly important for those who are at increased risk from the effects of flu, including:** *Pregnant women*
* *Children aged 2 or 3*
* *People aged 65 or over*
* *People with long-term health conditions*
* Carers
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| **﻿Click here to contact your GP or local pharmacist** |

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| **Why should pregnant women get the vaccine?**Flu can cause serious complications for you and your baby.For pregnant women, the flu vaccine will:* Reduce the risk of serious complications such as pneumonia, particularly in the later stages of pregnancy
* Help protect their baby, who will continue to have some immunity to flu during the first few months of his or her life
* Reduce the chance of the mother passing the infection to her new baby
* Reduce the risk of miscarriage or having a baby born too soon or with a low birthweight

Contact your midwife or GP to find out where you can get the free flu vaccine. In some areas, midwives can give a flu vaccine at the antenatal clinic. Learn more about why pregnant women should have the flu vaccine [here](http://health-info.service.nhs.uk/3IW9-ALDP-2ZS4QE-6DA0C-1/c.aspx). |

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| **What about children?**Flu can be horrible for little children, and if they get it, they can easily spread it around the whole family.The children's flu vaccine is offered as a yearly nasal spray to young children to protect them against flu.Don't put it off – ask your GP about the free [flu nasal spray](http://health-info.service.nhs.uk/3IW9-ALDP-2ZS4QE-6DA0D-1/c.aspx) for your child.  |

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| **I've got a long term health condition - can I get the vaccine?**Flu on top of any **long term health condition** can easily develop into something very serious, and you could end up in hospital. You are eligible for the free flu jab if you have the following conditions:* COPD, bronchitis, emphysema or asthma
* Heart disease
* Kidney disease
* Liver disease
* Have had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
* Diabetes
* Lowered immunity as a result of disease or medical treatment, such as steroid medication or cancer treatment
* A neurological condition, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy, or a learning disability
* A problem with your spleen, including sickle cell disease, or if you have had your spleen removed
* A BMI of 40 or above (seriously overweight)
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| **Are you aged 65 or over?** Flu can be more severe in people aged 65 or over. Flu can lead to serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia (a lung infection), and you could end up in hospital. You are eligible for the flu vaccine this year (2017-18) if you will be aged 65 and over on March 31 2018 – that is, you were born on or before March 31 1953. So, if you are currently 64 but will be 65 on March 31 2018, you do qualify.[Contact your GP or a pharmacist](http://health-info.service.nhs.uk/3IW9-ALDP-2ZS4QE-6DA0E-1/c.aspx) to get a free flu vaccine now.   |

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| **Why is flu vaccination important for carers?** Carers are people who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill.The flu jab is the best way to protect yourself and the person you care for from flu.The flu can be far more serious for the person you care for than you think. It can lead to serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia, and could even land them in hospital.Get more information on why carers should have the flu vaccine [here](http://health-info.service.nhs.uk/3IW9-ALDP-2ZS4QE-6DA0F-1/c.aspx). |

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| **Click here to contact your GP or local pharmacist** |

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| [Get regular healthy living advice and join in the conversation](http://health-info.service.nhs.uk/3IW9-ALDP-2ZS4QE-6DA0J-1/c.aspx) |

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