

5. Act Now – Look after yourself, look after others: flu immunisation



“This year, the public will be better protected from flu than ever before, with at-risk groups being offered the most effective vaccine available. Every member of NHS staff and health and social care staff that offer direct patient/client care is expected to get their jab.” Professor Jane Cummings, September 2018

As health and social care staff, make sure you get your flu vaccine. The vaccine is free for NHS staff, as well as health and care staff that offer direct patient/client care.

As health and care professionals, we should use every opportunity throughout the flu vaccination season to identify people in eligible groups and strongly encourage them to protect themselves, the people they care for and their family.

Visit: <http://www.nhsemployers.org/campaigns/flu-fighter/nhs-flu-fighter/free-resources/>

Act Now:

- Be a role model – get vaccinated;
- Actively invite any individuals who are pregnant, in the under 65 years at risk groups and those aged 65 years and over for their flu vaccine;
- Work together with your organisation’s flu lead to identify people who are eligible;
- Raise awareness of free flu vaccination among people who are eligible, as listed in the [Green Book](#) and the [annual flu letter](#);
- Give people who are eligible (or their parents or carers, if relevant) face-to-face advice on the importance of flu vaccination;
- Include information on flu vaccination with other health-related messages and existing health promotion or vaccination programmes;
- Use positive messages to demonstrate how important it is that people have the vaccination;
- Ensure information is simple, easy to read (if written) and provides a consistent message about flu and flu vaccination;
- Remind people that they could be a carrier of the flu (with or without symptoms).

Case Study: Improving vaccination uptake by changing the way pregnant women were offered and accessed services:

- The midwifery team at James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust created a process which increased the number of pregnant women being vaccinated against influenza and pertussis;
- They developed a process where women could access the vaccines after their 20-week anomaly scans, at the same appointment, with no additional visits or different locations.
- Women beyond 20 weeks of pregnancy were also encouraged to have their vaccinations, wherever possible in conjunction with another of their appointments to improve experience;
- Vaccination rates have now reached 76% coverage for influenza and 80% for pertussis, a significant increase as it was previously below 40% for both vaccines;
- Feedback from women is positive – they received an enhanced care option with no further need to access other services for their care.



For more information: https://www.england.nhs.uk/atlas_case_study/improving-vaccination-uptake-by-changing-the-way-pregnant-women-were-offered-and-accessed-services/

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Case Study: Practice nurses promoting the flu vaccine to the homeless community:

- The Inclusion Healthcare CIC General Practice Nursing team identified a need to improve the health and wellbeing of the homeless with the support of Leicester City CCG;
- There was low uptake of seasonal flu vaccine amongst those people who were homeless;
- The nurses found that whilst interested in using primary care health services, many rough sleepers found it difficult to access appointments;
- The nurses began to offer a new approach which included working outside of the typical clinical parameters for appointment times and in different locations using a nurse-led clinic in an outreach setting;
- Thirteen people attended the new clinic with ten taking up the flu vaccine on offer;
- Many of this cohort had not sought medical advice for some time, which demonstrates an impact on reaching this under-served vulnerable population at clinical risk;
- Many of the thirteen continued to access the centre, engaging with the Outreach and council's Housing Department to seek temporary housing;
- The support to access health assessment and treatment was welcomed.

For more information: https://www.england.nhs.uk/atlas_case_study/practice-nurses-promoting-flu-vaccines-to-the-homeless-community/

Key messages for health and care staff to share in this year's flu campaign (2018/19):

- Even healthy people can get the flu;
- Flu can kill;
- The flu vaccine is the most effective protection against flu;
- The flu jab can't give you flu;
- The flu jab is the best way to protect you and the people you care for.

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/-/media/Employers/Publications/Flu-Fighter/Planning-your-campaign-a-flu-fighter-guide.pdf>

"The vaccine, available for the first time this year in the UK for those aged 65 and over, could reduce GP consultations by 30,000, hospitalisations by over 2,000 and prevent over 700 hospital deaths from flu in England.

The newly available 'adjuvanted' vaccine is expected to significantly boost effectiveness by improving the body's immune response to the vaccine."

Public Health England, September 2018

Additional resources:

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/flu-immunisation/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-flu-vaccine-available-this-winter-for-those-aged-65-and-over>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/extension-of-nhs-seasonal-influenza-vaccination-to-social-care-workers-and-staff-in-the-voluntary-managed-hospice-sector-letter-from-professor-stephen-powis/>



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