

**C**ITY and Hackney residents at higher risk from developing severe seasonal flu (influenza) are being urged to have a free flu vaccine this autumn, as we enter the flu season.

Anyone can catch the flu, but it can be much worse for people at higher risk.

You can help prevent the spread of flu (and coronavirus) by covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, washing your hands frequently or using hand gels, and throwing any used tissues in the bin as soon as possible.

Getting a flu vaccination can help to protect you from flu and avoid putting pressure on the NHS. Speak to your GP, practice nurse or pharmacist today to book a vaccination appointment, to get the best possible protection.

If you are concerned about visiting your GP or pharmacy because of coronavirus, please feel reassured that the borough's healthcare services have all the



**Protect yourself, your loved ones and the NHS this winter by getting your flu jab**



**Do the right thing**

GP surgeries are safe for local people to bring themselves and their loved ones in to have their flu jabs. Below: groups such as pregnant women can get their flu jab for free

necessary protocols in place to protect you and can answer any questions you may have. They may also be able to make alternative arrangements if you think you may struggle to get to a GP surgery or pharmacy.

If you belong to one of the groups mentioned in the

panel on the far right, it is important that you have the flu vaccination this season even if you were vaccinated last year.

The flu virus frequently changes, so the vaccine is different from year to year to keep up with it.

The flu vaccination does not provide protection against coronavirus.



**“ The flu vaccine protects the individual but also stops flu spreading around the community ”**

For pregnant women, the vaccine may also be available through maternity services and

for frontline health and social care workers. Arrangements can be made through your

## Myth busting: everything you wanted to know about the flu jab but were afraid to ask

### Does the flu vaccine give you flu?

No. There is a widely-held perception that having the flu vaccine can give you a mild form of flu. This is just a myth. The injected flu vaccine cannot cause flu, because there are no active viruses in the vaccine.

Some people may get a mild high temperature and slight muscle aches for a day or so. Other side effects are extremely rare.

### Is it better to get sick with flu than to get a flu vaccine?

No. Flu can be a serious disease, particularly among young children, older adults, and people with certain chronic health conditions, such as asthma, heart disease or diabetes. Any flu infection can carry a risk of serious complications, hospitalisation or death, even among otherwise healthy children and adults. Therefore, getting vaccinated to obtain immune protection is a safer choice than risking illness to obtain immune protection.

### I have a healthy lifestyle and don't often get colds or feel ill. What are the benefits for me?

Getting the annual flu vaccine is a safe, effective way to prevent the flu. The vaccine causes your body to develop antibodies to several strains of the influenza virus. These antibodies help protect your body against infection. We are urging everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated against flu, to help protect the NHS as we continue to battle the coronavirus pandemic.

### Does a flu vaccination increase your risk of getting coronavirus?

No. There is no evidence that getting a flu vaccination increases your risk of getting sick from coronavirus.

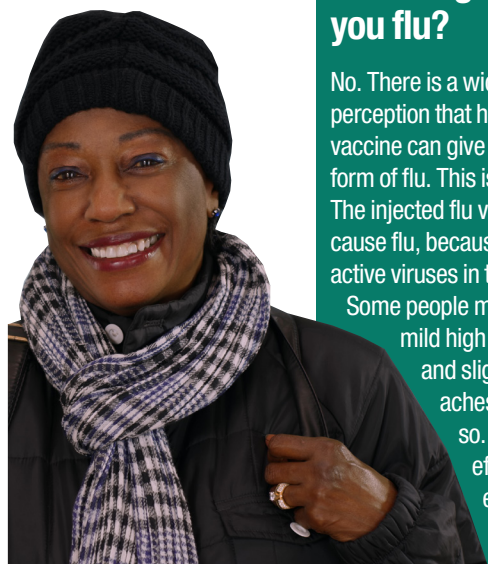
### Are the vaccine's ingredients safe?

Yes. Like any vaccine, extensive testing is carried out before it is made available for patients. A full list of ingredients is available online at: [medicines.org.uk/emc/browse-medicines/](https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/browse-medicines/)

### Is the vaccine halal/kosher?

The adult flu vaccination is both halal and kosher. The children's nasal spray vaccine has been approved as kosher by Rabbi Abraham Adler from the Kashrus and Medicines Information Service, who has advised the Government on kashrut issues.

The Muslim Council of Britain has advice available at: [mcb.org.uk/resources/opvac](https://mcb.org.uk/resources/opvac). If you have any questions please contact your GP or pharmacist who will be happy to discuss your options.





# These stories were compiled with the help of City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group and City & Hackney GP Confederation

THESE  
PAGES

## Is my GP surgery safe to visit?

GP SURGERIES are safe. During the current coronavirus pandemic, surgery staff have been working hard to ensure that they can provide services, care and advice to you safely. To keep you safe, staff are ensuring social distancing in line with government guidance and wearing PPE, while regular cleaning and disinfection of all areas is taking place.



## Doctor's orders: why it's even more important to get vaccinated this year

### Dr Opat, Cranwich Road Surgery

"I'm Dr Opat at Cranwich Road Surgery in Stamford Hill, Hackney. This year, it's even more important than ever to get vaccinated against the flu. Being protected from the flu will help prevent a potential outbreak happening at the same time as a potential spike in coronavirus cases, which would completely overwhelm the NHS. This year as well it's really important to make sure your 2-3 year-old children are vaccinated against the flu, as they can spread flu very easily around the community.

"I'd like to add that according to Jewish law Halakah, there is no problem with Kashrut or Kashrus with respect to having the flu vaccine.

"Go and contact your GP surgery and get vaccinated for the flu today."

### Dr Colvin, The Lawson Practice

"I'm Dr Colvin, a GP in Hackney. This year it is more important than ever that people get their flu jab done. If lots of people get ill with flu and with coronavirus at the same time, this could overwhelm the NHS. It will put vulnerable people at risk of getting seriously ill. So please get your flu jab now."



### Dr Chor, Neaman Practice

"THIS year is more important than ever to get the flu vaccination, as it can stop flu going from person to person. Keep your guard up against getting the flu this winter and do not hesitate in getting an appointment if you are eligible. "Please contact your GP who can help you."

From left: Dr Opat, Dr Colvin and Dr Chor

## Who is eligible to get a free flu jab?

PEOPLE most at risk from flu and are eligible for a free flu jab from September include:

- All adults 65 and over
- All children aged 2-11
- People with certain medical conditions making them at risk (including children in at-risk groups from six months of age)
- Chronic (long-term) respiratory disease, such as severe asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or bronchitis
- Chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic neurological disease, such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease
- A learning disability
- Diabetes

employer. Children will be offered the flu vaccine – via a nasal spray – through their school.

It is very important that parents sign and return the flu vaccine consent form for their child.

Dr Sandra Husbands, Director of Public Health for Hackney and the City, and Dr Deborah

CONTACT your child's GP if your child is aged two or three years old to arrange a flu vaccination appointment. If your child is at primary school or in Year 7 of secondary school, the school will send you a leaflet and consent form. Please sign the form and return it. For more information visit: [nhs.uk/child-flu](https://www.nhs.uk/child-flu)

Colvin, City and Hackney GP Confederation, have said: "It is more important than ever this year that eligible people are getting the flu vaccination to prevent a spike in flu cases and a possible second spike of coronavirus happening at the same time, causing a lot of illness and overwhelming

the NHS this winter. The flu vaccine protects the individual but also stops flu spreading around the community.

"We have a vaccination for the flu, something we don't yet have for coronavirus.

"Flu vaccinations have saved millions of people over the years from

catching the flu, which means less illness and fewer GP appointments and hospital admissions, so we can spare the NHS this winter.

"So do your bit for community immunity this winter, get the flu vaccine, stay safe, protect your community and save the NHS."

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## reasons to vaccinate your child

### I am nervous about needles!

Don't worry, if you are nervous about needles, let your doctor or pharmacist know in advance of your flu appointment and they will reassure you during your appointment with a breathing and counting down exercise.

### Does the flu vaccine provide protection from coronavirus?

No. The vaccine purely provides protection against seasonal flu. Research into a vaccine for covid-19 is ongoing and totally separate to the annual flu vaccine.

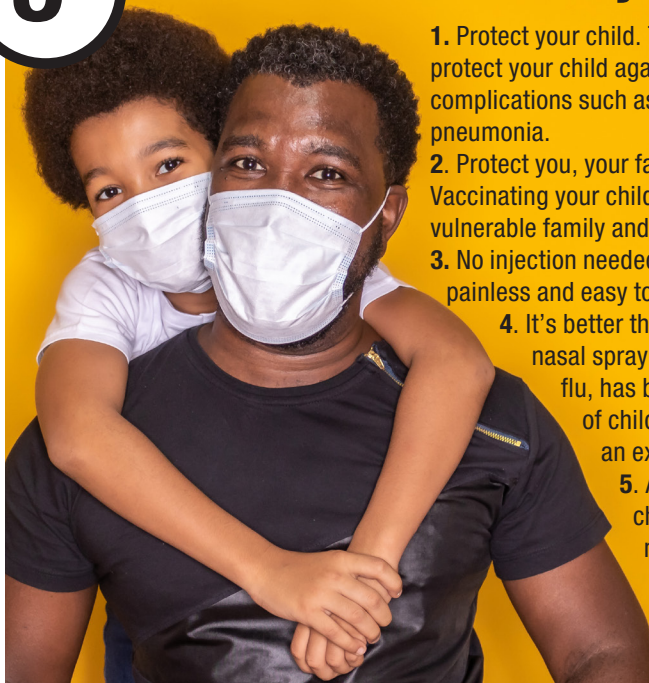
### How does covid affect flu?

This year, more than ever, it's really important that everyone who is eligible gets the flu vaccination.

There are two key reasons for this:

- Flu is a serious illness. We want to reduce the number of people treated for it this year to free up space and resources within the NHS in case there is a second wave of hospital admissions related to coronavirus. By getting your flu jab, you are doing your bit to protect the NHS.

- If you are unwell with symptoms of flu or coronavirus, but you have been vaccinated against flu, it is unlikely that you will have flu, and your GP will be able to advise you accordingly.



1. Protect your child. The vaccine will help protect your child against flu and serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia.
2. Protect you, your family and friends. Vaccinating your child will help protect more vulnerable family and friends.
3. No injection needed. The nasal spray is painless and easy to have.
4. It's better than having the flu. The nasal spray helps protect against flu, has been given to millions of children worldwide and has an excellent safety record.
5. Avoid costs. If your child gets flu, you may have to take time off work or arrange alternative childcare.

- A weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDs) or treatment (such as cancer treatment)
- Morbidly obese (defined as BMI of 40 and above)
- All pregnant women
- People living with someone who's at high risk from coronavirus (on the NHS shielded patient list)
- All frontline health or social care workers
- Adults aged 50 to 64 may also be eligible later on in the season