



# When should I get my flu vaccine?

Information for adults eligible for a flu vaccine on the NHS

## Who should have a flu vaccine?

Flu vaccination is recommended for those who are most at risk of serious complications if they get flu. For adults this includes everyone aged 65 years and over, pregnant women, and those with certain long-term health conditions. Flu can be a serious illness in these people and the vaccine offers the best protection.

## Why do I have to wait until October for my flu vaccine?

This year most eligible adults will be offered a flu vaccine from early October, which might be slightly later than in previous years. This is because the latest scientific evidence shows that protection from the flu vaccine decreases over time in adults. It is therefore better to have the vaccine closer to when flu typically circulates.

## When should pregnant women get vaccinated?

Pregnant women should have the vaccine from September. This is because the protection from the vaccine is passed through the placenta to the baby, giving the baby protection for the first few months of life when they are particularly at risk from flu. Therefore pregnant women shouldn't delay vaccination, especially those who are heavily pregnant, as babies born during the flu season need to be protected against flu as well the pregnant woman herself.

## When should children get vaccinated?

Vaccination for children who are offered a flu vaccine on the NHS will also start from September because their protection from the vaccine doesn't decrease as quickly as it does in adults.



## Are there any other exceptions?

There will be a very small number of people who need to be vaccinated earlier than October. For instance, if someone is about to start chemotherapy in October, it is better for them to have the vaccine before they start their treatment. This is because they will respond better to the vaccine before their immune system becomes weaker.

You should speak to your GP if you think you need to have the vaccine earlier than October and they will decide whether it is appropriate.

## When do I need to get my vaccination by?

Flu typically starts to circulate in December so it's best you get the vaccine by the end of November as it takes up to 14 days to work. But even if it's later than November, it is still worth asking whether you can have a flu vaccine.

## What should I do now?

For eligible adults, ask your GP practice or a pharmacy that offers NHS flu vaccination when you can book an appointment. You should be able to do this ahead of time. If you are pregnant, you can also ask your midwife.

Most children are also offered flu vaccination. For further information visit: [www.nhs.uk/child-flu](http://www.nhs.uk/child-flu)

## Where can I get further information?

Speak to your GP, practice nurse, pharmacist, or if you are pregnant, your midwife.

Visit: [www.nhs.uk/flujab](http://www.nhs.uk/flujab)



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