

Flu Vaccinations - At Risk Groups

Every winter we offer flu vaccinations to all our patients who meet the at risk criteria defined by the Department of Health. The list of eligible patients who will be offered the seasonal flu vaccine for the 2013/2014 season and may be found in the table below.

Eligible Groups	Further Detail
All patients aged 65 years and over	"Sixty-five and over" is defined as those aged 65 years and over on 31 March 2014 (i.e. born on or before 31 March 1949).
Chronic respiratory disease aged six months or older	Asthma that requires continuous or repeated use of inhaled or systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission.
	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) including chronic bronchitis and emphysema: Bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis, interstitial lung fibrosis, pneumoconiosis and bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD).
	Children who have previously been admitted to hospital for lower respiratory tract disease.
Chronic heart disease aged six months or older	Congenital heart disease, hypertension with cardiac complications, chronic heart failure, individuals requiring regular medication and/or follow-up for ischaemic heart disease.
Chronic kidney disease aged six months or older	Chronic kidney disease at stage 3, 4 or 5, chronic kidney failure, nephrotic syndrome, kidney transplation.
Chronic liver disease aged six months or older	Cirrhosis, biliary atresia, chronic hepatitis.
Chronic neurological disease aged six months or older	Stroke, transient ischaemic attack (TIA). Conditions in which respiratory function may be compromised, due to neurological disease (e.g. polio syndrome suffers).
	Clinicians should consider on an individual basis the clinical needs of patients including individuals with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and related or similar conditions.
	Hereditary and degenerative disease of the nervous system or muscles, or severe neurological disability.
Diabetes aged six months or older	Type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes requiring insulin or oral hypoglycaemic drugs, diet controlled diabetes.

<p>Immunosuppression aged 6 months and older</p>	<p>Immunosuppression due to disease or treatment. Patients undergoing chemotherapy leading to immunosuppression. Asplenia or splenic dysfunction, HIV infection at all stages. Individuals treated with or likely to be treated with systemic steroids for more than a month at a dose equivalent to prednisolone at 20mg or more per day (any age) or for children under 20kg a dose of 1 mg or more per kg per day. It is difficult to define at what level of immuno-suppression a patient could be considered to be at a greater risk of the serious consequences of flu and should be offered flu vaccination. This decision is best made on an individual basis and left to the patient's clinician. Some immunocompromised patients may have a suboptimal immunological response to the vaccine. Consideration should also be given to the vaccination of household contacts of immunocompromised individuals, i.e. individuals who expect to share living accommodation on most days over the winter and therefore for whom continuing close contact is unavoidable. This may include carers (see below).</p>
<p>Pregnant Women</p>	<p>Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy (first, second or third trimesters).</p>
<p>People in long-stay residential or homes</p>	<p>Vaccination is recommended for people living in long-stay residential care homes or other long-stay care facilities where rapid spread is likely to follow introduction of infection and cause high morbidity and mortality. This does not include, for instance, prisons, young offender institutions, or university halls of residence.</p>
<p>Carers</p>	<p>Those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer, or the carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill.</p>
<p>Health and Social Care Staff</p>	<p>Professional health and social care workers who are in direct contact with patients/clients should be vaccinated by their employer as part of an occupational health programme.</p>

Patients in these categories will also be offered a vaccine against pneumonia.

The rules laid down by the Department of Health state that if you do not fall into an at risk group, we are not permitted to provide vaccination under the NHS. However you can obtain a private vaccination and many businesses now provide this facility for their staff.