

Stay healthy – get this year's free flu vaccine



CHI:

Dear Sir/Madam

The free flu vaccine to help protect you against flu this winter will shortly be available at your GP practice. People aged 65 or over are at particular risk from the flu virus, so we recommend you get this vaccine to help protect yourself against flu.

Why get the vaccine?

- Getting the vaccine is the best protection available against flu.
- You have to get the vaccine every year because the virus changes constantly and your immunity reduces over time.
- The vaccine helps protect against more than one type of flu virus.
- The vaccine **can't** give you flu; it can help stop you catching it and spreading it to others.

The majority of people aged 65 or over in Scotland choose to get the flu vaccine each year. Even if you think you may have had flu this year, you should still make an appointment to get the vaccine when you're feeling better. The flu vaccine is also recommended for people with a health condition and pregnant women.

What happens next?

Each GP practice makes its own arrangements for offering the flu vaccine to their patients. Flu immunisation usually begins in October. If you haven't heard anything from your practice by mid-October please contact them to ask about an appointment.

Other free vaccines you can get:

- A shingles vaccine – available to people aged 70-79 years and helps protect you against shingles, which can often lead to long-lasting pain and is more common in older people.
- A pneumococcal vaccine – available for everyone aged 65 or over and helps protect you against pneumonia and meningitis.

Most people only ever need one dose of the shingles and pneumococcal vaccines, and they are available all year round. When you go for your flu vaccine, ask your GP or nurse about these other vaccines.

Yours faithfully

For more information about the vaccines available, you can call the free NHS inform helpline on **0800 22 44 88** or speak to your GP, nurse or pharmacist.

More information about the flu vaccine and other vaccines can also be found at nhsinform.scot/flu

