

Autumn/winter  
2020/21

# What to expect after the flu vaccine:

## Information for parents



Healthier  
Scotland  
Scottish  
Government



Public Health  
Scotland 

This leaflet tells you about the common side effects of the flu vaccine that your child was given today.

This information is a guide only. Always seek medical advice from your GP, practice nurse or school nurse team if you're worried. Or call **NHS 24** on **111**.

Thank you for protecting your child, others and the NHS.

# Common side effects of the flu vaccine

Most children will not experience any side effects. However, if your child had the **nasal (nose) spray vaccine**, the most common side effects are:

- a blocked or runny nose
- reduced appetite
- weakness
- muscle aches
- headache.

If your child had the **injectable vaccine**, they might experience similar side effects to the nasal (nose) spray vaccine (except the blocked or runny nose), but the most common side effects are at the site where the injection was given:

- swelling
- redness
- tenderness
- a small hard lump.

These potential side effects are much less serious than developing flu or complications associated with flu. They usually go away after a couple of days and you do not need to do anything about them.

Less common side effects include a slightly raised temperature, shivering, tiredness or a nosebleed after the nasal (nose) spray vaccine.

For more information on side effects, please visit [www.nhsinform.scot/childflu](http://www.nhsinform.scot/childflu)

## **How to treat a fever**

A fever is a body temperature over 37.5°C. Fevers are quite common in young children, but are usually mild. If your child's face feels hot to the touch and they look red or flushed, they may have a fever. You can check their body temperature with a thermometer.

Keep your child cool by:

- making sure they do not have too many layers of clothes or blankets on
- turning down the house heating
- giving them plenty of cool drinks.

Putting your child in a bath, sponging them down or fanning them will not lower their fever. But it might comfort them.

As fevers are usually mild, you only need to give a dose of paracetamol (or infant paracetamol if your child is under 6 years of age) if your child appears uncomfortable or unwell. Read the instructions on the bottle very carefully.



**Remember, never give medicines that contain aspirin to children under 16 years of age.**

## **Close contact with family members who are severely immunocompromised**

Children who have had the nasal (nose) spray vaccine should avoid close contact with family members who are severely immunocompromised (for example, bone marrow transplant patients who need isolation) for up to two weeks following immunisation.



## A few children will need a second dose

Almost all children will only need one dose of the vaccine. However, a small number of children will need a second dose to make sure their immunity has built up fully. Please see the information leaflet that was sent to you or ask your GP or practice nurse for more information.

[www.nhsinform.scot/childflu](http://www.nhsinform.scot/childflu)

If your child is at school and needs a second dose, please contact your local NHS Board to arrange this.

## Reporting side effects

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme. You can do this online at [yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk](http://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk) or by calling the Yellow Card hotline on **0800 731 6789** (available Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm).



Translations



Easy read



BSL



Audio



Large print



Braille

## Other formats available at:



[www.nhsinform.scot/childflu](http://www.nhsinform.scot/childflu)



0131 314 5300



[p hs.p hs-otherformats@nhs.net](mailto:p hs.p hs-otherformats@nhs.net)

Published by Public Health Scotland  
1 South Gyle Crescent  
Edinburgh EH12 9EB  
© Public Health Scotland 2020  
All rights reserved.

Established on 1 April 2020,  
Public Health Scotland is Scotland's  
national public agency for  
improving and protecting the health  
and wellbeing of Scotland's people.



[www.publichealthscotland.scot](http://www.publichealthscotland.scot)