



Norfolk and Waveney

## GET THE JAB, GET *FLU SAFE*

Flu is a highly contagious infection that anyone can catch, and it can be a really serious illness for some people. If children or staff become poorly with flu it can mean days off school and the risk of spreading to others. Those at greater risk are encouraged to have the flu jab to give them immunity against this year's virus.

Those at greater risk from flu include those children and adults with health conditions such as severe asthma, chest or heart complaints and diabetes, pregnant women and people aged 65 or over.

A child or adult in any of the at-risk groups can have the jab for free and it does not give you flu. For more information, speak to your GP, local pharmacist, or visit [www.nhs.uk/flu](http://www.nhs.uk/flu).

We would be grateful if you could circulate the attached letter from Dr Jenny Harries, Director of Public Health at NHS Norfolk and Waveney through your school networks such as newsletters and websites in the hope of reaching every parent or carer.

Resources for schools:

- [Letter from Dr Jenny Harries](#), Director of Public Health for schools – parents/carers
- [Flu Safe campaign poster](#)
- Article for school newsletters (see text below)

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Those at greater risk from flu include those children and adults with health conditions such as severe asthma, chest or heart complaints and diabetes, pregnant women and people aged 65 or over.

Dr Jenny Harries, Director of Public Health at NHS Norfolk and Waveney, said people don't realise quite how serious flu can be.

She added: "Flu is not like a cold – it can be a really serious illness for some people and it doesn't just affect older people. If you're pregnant, have lowered immunity or a long term health condition such as severe asthma, a chest or heart complaint, or diabetes, then you should also get a free flu jab from your GP and get flu safe.

"The flu jab is completely safe, and it can't give you flu."

NHS Norfolk and Waveney is encouraging everyone across the area who knows anyone who may be at risk from flu to tell them how important it is that they get protected. People who are carers and frontline health and social care staff are also encouraged to get a jab to protect themselves and those around them.

The flu vaccine changes every year to fight the latest strains of flu, so even if you had a jab last winter you need another one this year to stay flu safe. If you're in any of the at-risk groups, the flu jab is completely free and is a safe way of protecting you and your family in a matter of minutes.

The best time to be vaccinated is at the start of the flu season from October to early November, so it's good to get in early and get flu safe in time for the winter.

For more information, speak to your GP, local pharmacist, or visit [www.nhs.uk/flu](http://www.nhs.uk/flu).

## **MORE DETAILS ON THE AT RISK GROUPS:**

1. Flu vaccinations are currently recommended for the following 'at risk' groups:
  - people aged 65 years or over (including those becoming age 65 years by 31 March 2013).
  - all pregnant women (including those women who become pregnant during the flu season).
  - people with a serious medical condition such as
    - i. chronic (long-term) respiratory disease, such as severe asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or bronchitis
    - ii. chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
    - iii. chronic kidney disease at stage 3, 4 or 5
    - iv. chronic liver disease
    - v. chronic neurological disease, such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease
    - vi. diabetes
    - vii. a weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or treatment (such as cancer treatment)
  - 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
  - people who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill