

FLU IMMUNISATIONS FOR AUTUMN 2014

The flu virus circulates every winter, usually over a few weeks. The best time to have a flu jab is in the autumn, from September to early November. Do not wait until the winter, when the flu virus will be circulating, before getting your flu jab.

Please ring the Surgery for an appointment or book on line if you are on the 'at risk' group (see below)

Who should have the flu vaccination?

For most people, flu is unpleasant but not serious. You will usually recover within a week.

However, certain people are at greater risk of developing serious [complications of flu](#), such as [bronchitis](#) and [pneumonia](#). These conditions may require hospital treatment.

The flu vaccine is offered free to people who are at risk, to protect them from catching flu and developing serious complications.

At-risk groups

It is recommended that you have a flu jab if you:

- are 65 years old or over
- are pregnant (see below)
- have a serious medical condition (see below)
- are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility (not including prisons, young offender institutions or university halls of residence)
- are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill
- are a frontline health or social care worker (see below)



If you are the parent of a child who is over six months old and has a long-term condition on the list below, speak to your GP about the flu vaccine. Your child's condition may get worse if they catch flu.

Pregnant women

It is recommended that **all** pregnant women should have the flu vaccine, whatever stage of pregnancy they're in.

This is because there is good evidence that pregnant women have an increased risk of developing complications if they get flu, particularly from the H1N1 strain.

Studies have shown that the flu vaccine can be safely and effectively given during any trimester of pregnancy. The vaccine does not carry risks for either the mother or baby. In fact, studies have shown that mothers who have had the vaccine while pregnant pass some protection to their babies, which lasts for the first few months of their lives.

People with medical conditions

The flu vaccine is offered free to anyone who is over six months of age and has one of the following medical conditions:

- chronic (long-term) respiratory disease, such as severe [asthma](#), [COPD](#) or [bronchitis](#)
- chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)
- [chronic kidney disease](#)
- chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)
- chronic neurological disease, such as a [stroke](#), [TIA](#) or [post-polio syndrome](#)
- [diabetes](#)
- a weakened immune system due to conditions such as [HIV](#), or treatments that suppress the immune system such as [chemotherapy](#)

If you live with someone who has a weakened immune system, you may also be able to have a flu vaccine. Speak to your GP about this.

Frontline health or social care workers

Employers are responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place for frontline healthcare staff to have the flu vaccine.

Outbreaks of flu can occur in health and social care settings, and staff, patients and residents are at risk of infection.

Frontline health and social care staff should protect themselves by having the flu vaccine to prevent the spread of flu to colleagues and other members of the community.

If you care for someone who is elderly or disabled, speak to your GP about getting vaccinated against seasonal flu. You should also ensure that the person you care for has the flu jab.

Who should NOT have the flu vaccination?

You should not have the flu vaccine if you have ever had an allergic reaction to a flu vaccine or one of its ingredients. This happens very rarely.

If you have had a confirmed very serious (anaphylactic) reaction to egg, have an egg allergy with uncontrolled asthma or another type of allergy to egg. If you are ill with a fever, do not have your flu jab until you have recovered.

SHINGLE VACCINATIONS - will be offered to patients aged 70,78 or 79 on 1st September 2014, but no other age. Please contact the surgery for more details.



REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS

We would like to remind our patients about the policy of ordering of Repeat Prescriptions

Repeat prescriptions are drugs that your doctor has marked as "repeatable". Many prescriptions are "Acute" prescriptions and these are ONE OFF courses. However some conditions require medication to be taken regularly for long periods of time (or permanently) and these are the sorts of drugs which would be put on a "Repeat".

A list of your repeat prescriptions are printed out on the right hand side of the prescription form. The green side is the legal prescription; the white side is used by us to list your repeatable prescriptions. Keep this sheet for future reference. Always keep the latest one issued as this is the one that is up to date.

Underneath your repeat prescriptions is a "Review date". This is the date that your doctor wants to come back to the surgery for a review. Keep an eye on this date as it may change - for instance new evidence may emerge that requires us to change your medication.

When we receive a repeat request, the Receptionist check that the drug is a repeat, the review date has not passed and that the frequency of ordering is in line with what we expect. If these parameters are correct then the prescription is printed and passed for signing by your USUAL doctor, or in his or her absence, one of the other doctors. The script can then go to the pharmacist or dispensary for issuing.

REVIEW DATES ARE IMPORTANT and expired review dates are one of the commonest reasons for prescription delays.

Ordering too early is a problem - if you have a legitimate reason, eg going on holiday, then let the Receptionist know when you order.

Repeat prescriptions may be requested by post/fax/internet or by delivering your request to either Surgery. **Fax No 01928 725677.**

PLEASE NOTE THAT REQUESTS FOR REPEAT PRESCRIPTION OVER THE TELEPHONE ARE NOT PERMITTED

Please try to use the right-side of the prescription to re-order. Prescriptions ordered on a Friday will not be available until the following Monday.

REMEMBER TO GIVE AT LEAST TWO WORKING DAY'S NOTICE WHEN REQUESTING YOUR PRESCRIPTION

Prescriptions can be collected from the local chemists in Helsby, Elton, Frodsham or Kingsley from Reception as they collect the prescription from us, or alternatively, may be posted to patients supplying an SAE.

Helsby & Elton Practice Newsletter AUTUMN 2014



CHILD FLU CLINIC

This year, nationally, two, three and four year olds (but not 5 or over) on or before 1st September 2014, are being offered a painless vaccine against flu. This is given simply as a spray in each nostril and **does not** require an injection. If your child is in the age group of children to whom the vaccine is offered this year, you are recommended to book into a **Child Flu Clinic** appointment at the surgery by phoning 01928 723676. Other age groups are not yet included, but in time over future years, the aim is to vaccinate all 2-16 year olds.

Flu can be a very unpleasant illness. Symptoms include fever, blocked nose, cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints. Complications include ear and chest infections. Whilst usually a brief, but troublesome infection, the illness can be severe and lead to hospitalisation. Further information can be found on www.nhs.uk/child-flu

Dr Jonathan Gregson

Dr Gregson has been selected to lead a twelve month project run by the West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group which is developing and transforming primary care in the local area. As a result of this he is no longer available to book appointments at either of our surgeries on a Tuesday. Dr Abbie Brown who is familiar to our patients having worked with us over the summer of 2012 is replacing Dr Gregson on a Tuesday.

Online Facilities – www.helsbyandeltonpractice.co.uk

For patients who are unaware, the practice offers a number of useful online facilities through the practice website where you can book appointments to see a GP or a practice nurse or order repeat prescriptions.

Patients can register for this service in two ways:

- 1) Online by clicking on the EMIS Access icon on the website homepage. You will then find instructions to register an account.
- 2) Phone the reception team on 01928 723676 or visit the front desk at the practice and request to register an account.

For both options you will then be given a passcode which ensures secure access to the facilities. This is a really useful service and is designed to make your lives easier when you need to book an appointment to see a GP or practice nurse or order your repeat prescriptions.