



Protecting people with learning disabilities against flu



1. Why are people with learning disabilities being offered the flu vaccine?

- Flu can be a very unpleasant illness causing fever, stuffy nose, dry cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints and extreme tiredness often last for several days. Some people can also get a very high fever, sometimes without the usual flu symptoms, and may need to go to hospital for treatment. People with learning difficulties are offered a free flu vaccination because they may be more susceptible to the effects of flu and at increased risk of developing complications including bronchitis, pneumonia, and a painful ear infection that may be severe.



2. What are the benefits of the vaccine?

- Having a vaccine will help protect people from what can be a very nasty illness and reduce the chance of family, friends and carers getting it as well.



3. How will the vaccine be given?

- The flu vaccination is given as an injection in the arm.



4. Who will give me the flu vaccination?

- The flu vaccine is free on the NHS and it will be given at your GP surgery, most probably by the nurse. Some pharmacies in your local area may also be able to vaccinate you.



5. The best time to have a flu vaccination?

- The best time to have your flu vaccination is in the autumn but you can get it later in the winter if they are flu stocks left.

6. Are there any side effects of the vaccine?

- These may be a mild fever or muscles aches for a few days after the jab.

7. What will happen next?

- You need to contact your GP surgery to arrange a vaccination or ask your local pharmacy if they are vaccinating.



For more information go to

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

