

Dear Parent or Guardian

### **School Based Influenza Nasal Spray Vaccination Programme**

Vaccination is one of the most successful Public Health interventions giving protection against potentially fatal diseases for the whole of our population.

The Influenza nasal spray vaccination is routinely offered annually as part of the national programme for vaccination of children and young people, **for all students in Reception up to and including Year 11**, to protect them against seasonal flu.

It is given as a simple, quick and painless spray up the nose. By having this vaccination your child will also protect others at risk from flu and help reduce pressure on the NHS.

Contained within this letter are some frequently asked questions and useful information about the vaccine, and the virus it protects against.

Further information is also available on the NHS Choices website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

Please take this opportunity to check that your child's routine vaccinations are up to date. You can check this with your GP Practice. If you have any questions, you can also contact the Immunisation Service or your School Nurse.

#### **How do I give consent for this vaccination?**

Complete the steps below, before the closing date and time, to consent for your child to have the Influenza nasal spray vaccination. **The consent form will close 5 working days before the vaccination session date.**

**Your online consent form closes at 11am, 5 working days before your session date, which can be found in the accompanying email from your child's school.**

1. Click on the following the link: [www.susseximmunisations.co.uk/Forms/Flu](http://www.susseximmunisations.co.uk/Forms/Flu)
2. Enter and confirm your preferred email address – you will receive a confirmation email following submission of the consent form.
3. Enter your school code: **SX114427**
4. Complete and submit the consent form, indicating your choice of consent - Please ensure you provide the child's registered address and GP.

If you are unable to complete the online form, do not want your child to have this vaccination course, or wish to change your consent, please read the frequently asked questions for how to proceed.

We hope that the information provided helps you to make a positive decision about protecting your child and the wider population against this virus, for which vaccination is readily available.

Yours sincerely

*Sue Dawson*

**Immunisation Clinical Service Manager**

Speak to a member of the Immunisation Service by calling your local team on 01273 696011

 Brighton  
Ext. 3789

Chichester  
Ext. 8100

Crawley  
Ext. 2043

East Sussex  
Ext. 2080

Worthing  
Ext. 8533

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What do I do if I cannot complete the online consent form?** You can contact your local team in the Immunisation Service on the number provided, before the closing date and time, and complete a verbal consent with them before the closing date and time. The online form will re-open, 1 working day after the school session date, for you to complete a consent form and contact the team to book into a catch up clinic.

**What do I do if I do not want my child to have this vaccination?** Please complete the online consent form following the steps in the parent letter, and indicating that you do not give consent for this vaccination. In secondary schools only, in the absence of a consent form, we may offer your child the opportunity to consent for vaccination themselves, following an assessment of their competence and understanding of what's involved with this vaccination.

**What do I do if I have changed my mind after completing an online consent form?** You must contact the Immunisation Service to change your consent and inform your child's school, by putting this in writing; prior to the vaccination session date.

**How will I know when my child has been vaccinated?** You will receive an email, sent to the address provided when completing the online form, advising you of the vaccination outcome. If your child was not vaccinated, following submission of a positive consent form, your email will advise of the reason for this and contain details of how to book into a catch up clinic.

**What vaccine is being offered and why?** The Fluenz Tetra nasal spray is the vaccine currently used for the children's routine Influenza vaccination programme. It offers protection against four strains of the Influenza virus which are anticipated to be circulating in the UK this winter. The virus in the vaccine is live, but it has been weakened so that it cannot cause the illness in healthy people. It can reduce the circulation of Influenza and can protect the wider community, particularly those for whom Influenza poses a serious health risk.

To read the vaccine Patient Information Leaflet visit: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3296/pil>

**What is Influenza?** Influenza is an unpleasant illness causing fever, stuffy nose, dry cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints, and extreme tiredness. This can last several days and may need hospital treatment. Serious complications include a painful ear infection, bronchitis, and pneumonia. The Influenza season in the UK is from Autumn through to Spring.

**Is the vaccine safe?** - The vaccine has undergone rigorous safety testing before being licensed for use in the UK. It is a well established vaccine with a good safety profile, and like all other vaccines unwanted reactions are constantly monitored.

**Shedding. What do I need to know?** The amount of virus shed after vaccination is normally below the levels needed to pass on the infection to others and it does not survive for long outside of the body. Unvaccinated children are not at risk of catching flu from the vaccine either through being in the same room where flu vaccine has been given or by being in individual contact with recently vaccinated children. This is in contrast to natural flu infection, which spreads easily during the flu season.

There is a very small percentage of children who are extremely immunocompromised (for example following a bone marrow transplant). These children are normally advised not to attend school due to the much higher risk of being in contact with other infections, including seasonal Influenza.

Children who have been vaccinated with the nasal spray should avoid household contact with people with very severely weakened immune systems for around two weeks following vaccination (for example those who are receiving chemotherapy).

**Are there any side effects of the vaccine?** Children may develop a runny or blocked nose, headache, tiredness and reduced appetite, lasting a few days. The vaccine is absorbed quickly so, even if your child sneezes immediately after having had it, there's no need to worry that it hasn't worked. Any other side effects are unusual. If you're worried about any reaction you can call the NHS 111 service.

**Children should not have the nasal vaccine if they:**

- Are currently wheezy or have been wheezy in the past three days (vaccination should be delayed until at least three days after the wheezing has stopped).
- Are severely asthmatic, i.e. being treated with oral steroids or high dose inhaled steroids.
- Have a condition that severely weakens their immune system or have someone in their household who needs isolation.
- Have had severe anaphylaxis to egg allergy requiring intensive care treatment.
- Have had severe anaphylaxis to any other components of the vaccine – check the Patient Information Leaflet.

**My child had the Influenza vaccination last year. Do they need another one this year?** Yes. The Influenza vaccine for each season has the current four strains of Influenza, these may be different from last year.

The World Health Organisation recommends annual vaccination.

**Does the nasal vaccine contain gelatine derived from pigs (porcine gelatine)?** Yes. The vaccine does contain a highly processed form of porcine gelatine, to keep it stable and effective. There is no porcine free alternative available for children in the non 'at risk categories'. The World Health Organisation and the Islamic Organisation for Medical Sciences advised gelatine derived from impure animals for use in medicines has been sufficiently transformed so as to make its consumption permissible. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/386842/2902998\\_PHE\\_FluPorcine\\_QAforParents\\_FINAL\\_CT.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/386842/2902998_PHE_FluPorcine_QAforParents_FINAL_CT.pdf)

**What if my child only has the vaccine in one nostril?** A spray in each nostril is to maximize contact with the cells in the nose. A single spray does induce a sufficient immune response to protect your child.

**What does consenting to SCFT staff to be able to view my child's Digital Health Record mean?** It enables any SCFT Children's Services staff, who provide care for your child, to see information which has been shared out from the GP and other health organisations records if they use compatible systems. We cannot view other organisations records without consent, except in exceptional circumstances. Access to your child's health record helps our services to make safe clinical decisions on the most appropriate treatment and care.

For further information see: <https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/contact-us/patient-records.htm>



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