



**School Immunisation Team,**  
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Dear Parent/Carer

This year the Fluenz Tetra® immunisation that protects against seasonal influenza is being offered to all children aged 5-7 years or in school years 1, 2 and 3 nationally. **This is a school based programme and is not available to this age group at your GP unless that is, your child has previously been identified as in the 'at risk' group of children and routinely receives a Flu vaccination at their GP. That service will continue as before.**

This vaccine is given as an intra nasal spray (no needles) and simply requires a small amount of vaccine to be squirted up each nostril. Our records show that your child falls into the age group to be immunised and we write to inform you this will be available in your child's school on the following date:

**Date of vaccination:- Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

Before the immunisation session the nurses need to know if your child has any serious illness and is currently receiving treatment or medications. They also need to know if he/she has had a confirmed anaphylactic reaction to a previous immunisation or any medicine or another substance. Please use the space on the consent form to record any relevant information.

**Please Note:** If, for any reason, your child misses his/her dose of the Fluenz Tetra® immunisation please do not worry. There is a process in place to ensure that the missed dose can be given at a community clinic in the school holidays. An information letter will be sent home to you via the school. There is no need to attend the GP.

Enclosed with this letter you will find a consent form. **PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY** and **return the completed consent form by Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November** to the school.

Please **remember to return the consent form even if you DO NOT consent to the vaccination for your child**, explaining the reason for your decision. This will help us in the development of the flu vaccination programme in the future.

Further information about the Childhood Flu Programme and Fluenz Tetra® can be found at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations) or [www.nhs.uk/child-flu](http://www.nhs.uk/child-flu)

Yours faithfully,

Wendy Cooke,  
Clinical Lead School Based Immunisation Team

## **The national childhood flu immunisation programme 2016/17**

### **What is flu?**

Flu is a highly infectious, acute, viral infection of the respiratory tract. It is transmitted by the inhalation of infected droplets and aerosols and by hand-to-mouth/eye contamination from an infected surface. The incubation period can be 1–5 days (average 2–3 days).

There are three types of influenza virus. Influenza A causes epidemics and pandemics. This virus is found in many different animals and may spread between them. Birds, particularly wildfowl, are the main animal reservoir. Influenza B is found predominantly in humans and may cause epidemics. Influenza C causes minor respiratory illness only.

### **Who does it affect?**

Flu can affect anyone, but it is a more serious illness in babies, pregnant women, older people and those with certain underlying conditions.

### **What are the features of flu?**

In healthy individuals, flu is usually an unpleasant but self-limiting illness with recovery in five to seven days. Common symptoms include the sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, myalgia (muscle aches) & severe fatigue. Sufferers can also experience a dry cough, sore throat and stuffy nose. In young children, gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea may be seen.

### **Possible complications of flu**

Common complications may include bronchitis, otitis media/middle ear infection (especially in children) and sinusitis. Other less common complications include secondary bacterial pneumonia, viral pneumonia, meningitis and encephalitis.

### **Why vaccinate children?**

Extending the current flu vaccination programme to all children aims to lower the public health impact of flu by:

- ☐ protecting children and thus averting a large number of cases of flu in children
- ☐ reducing flu transmission in children thus protecting older adults and those with clinical risk factors and averting many cases of severe disease and flu-related deaths

### **Measles Information**

You will have seen in the news that there have been serious outbreaks of measles in England and Wales in the past year. Teenagers have been the age group that have been most affected. This is because many of them missed out on their MMR vaccination in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the vaccine was mistakenly linked to cases of autism. By now your child should have had 2 doses of MMR, to fully protect them from the diseases of Measles, Mumps and Rubella. You can check if they have received both of these doses by looking in your child's red book or ask at your GP surgery.

If your child has NOT had two doses of MMR, and you would like them to be protected, please contact the Immunisation Hub on 01483 728201 extension 377 to arrange for an appointment at one of our catch up clinics.

Information about MMR and answers to some common questions can be found at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-dont-let-your-child-catch-it-flyer-for-schools>

If you would like any further information about the school based vaccination programme, please contact the Immunisation Hub.