



Increasing uptake for  
**Children's Nasal  
Flu Vaccine**

Toolkit for GPs and Pharmacists

October 2024

HSE National Immunisation Office

[hse.ie/flu](https://hse.ie/flu)

#YourBestShot

## Nasal flu vaccine for children aged 2 to 17

The Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) or nasal spray flu vaccine is licensed for use in children aged 2 to 17. Children aged 2 to 17 can get the flu vaccine for free as part of the HSE programme through participating GP's and Pharmacies. Some children will be offered the vaccine in schools.

### Children are twice as likely to catch flu than adults.

Flu can be serious and for some children, it can lead to serious complications like pneumonia or bronchitis. Children sick with flu, even with mild symptoms, can miss out on weeks in crèche, childcare and school, as well as their usual activities like hobbies and sports.

### Children carry the flu virus in their system longer than adults do.

They can catch and spread flu easily to other children and to older and vulnerable people around them. Children, especially younger children and children with long-term health conditions are most at risk of serious illness from flu.

### The nasal spray flu vaccine offers the best protection for children against flu this winter.

## Useful information and resources

The NIO have developed resources about children's nasal spray flu vaccine to support vaccinators, including:

- Our e-learning HSeLanD programme: **Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV)** available at [hse.ie](https://hse.ie)
- Algorithm for administering children's nasal flu vaccine available at <http://bit.ly/FluResource>
- Video showing how to administer LAIV vaccine to children on NIO YouTube at <https://bit.ly/LAIVdemo>
- Frequently asked questions about influenza vaccines available at <https://bit.ly/FluHCPs>
- Quick Reference Guide to influenza vaccines being offered this flu season available at <https://bit.ly/FluHCPs>

And more information on HSE and NIO websites: [hse.ie/flu](https://hse.ie/flu) and [immunisation.ie](https://immunisation.ie)

Don't forget to order vaccines for you patients by logging into [ordervaccines.ie](https://ordervaccines.ie)

## 5 tips to increase uptake of children's nasal flu vaccine

We recommend participating GP practices and Pharmacies:



Phone, text or email parents and guardians of children aged 2 to 17 to let them know the children's nasal flu vaccine is available for them free of charge.



Post on your website and social media accounts that the children's nasal flu vaccine is available, including clinic times.



Have HSE information materials like posters and leaflets on display in your practice or pharmacy.



Consider recommending the children's nasal flu vaccine to parents and guardians of children aged 2 to 17 who are in your practice or pharmacy with their child for another reason, if appropriate.



Talk to parents and guardians about the children's nasal spray flu vaccine and share the **Flu Facts**.

## What is flu?

Flu is a highly infectious illness caused by the flu virus.

The flu season begins at the **start of October**



and lasts until the **end of April.**

## Children carry the flu virus in their system longer



than adults do and they can spread the flu virus easily to other children, and vulnerable people around them.

## All children aged 2-17 years are



recommended the nasal flu vaccine for this season 2024/2025

## How does flu affect children?

Children are **twice as likely**



to catch flu than adults.



**1 in 10 children under 15**

attend their GP with flu-like illness in a typical flu season.

## Flu can be serious

and in some children, flu can lead to serious problems like pneumonia and bronchitis.

Children sick with flu can miss out on



weeks in crèche, childcare and school. They can also miss out on their hobbies and sports.

## Over 10 years in Ireland recently

almost **5000 children** were hospitalised because of flu, almost **200** needed intensive care and **40** children died.

Source: (HPSC)



## How many doses of the nasal flu vaccine do children need?

Most children only need **one** dose **every season**. A small number of children between the age of 2 to 8 years who are at-risk and have never had the flu vaccine before will need **2 doses 4 weeks apart** for protection.



## The nasal flu vaccine protects against the same strains



as the vaccine injection given to at-risk groups. Flu strains change each year, so children need to get the flu vaccine **every flu season.**

## The nasal flu vaccine is very safe for children

Some children may have a runny or blocked nose, aches and may have an increased temperature after getting the vaccine but it is usually mild and goes away on its own. Reactions are generally rare. The vaccine **cannot** give your child flu.



## The nasal flu vaccine is very effective

A study from the UK showed a **94% reduction** in primary school age children and a **59% reduction** in adults GP flu-like illness consultations after the children's flu vaccine was introduced.



Source: (G Kassianos, et al.)

The nasal flu vaccine has been given to children in the **US** since **2003**, **UK** since **2013**, and in **Ireland** since **2020.**

