

swine flu vaccination



information for parents of
children aged over
6 months and under 5 years

SWINE FLU INFORMATION

www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu
0800 1 513 513

Why are all young children now being offered the vaccine?

Young children seem to be particularly vulnerable to severe illness as a result of swine flu. Children under five have significantly higher rates of hospitalisation than children aged five to fifteen. They also have high rates of admission to intensive care and some children under five have died as a result of swine flu. Vaccination is the best way to protect young children from possible complications.

Are there are plans for introducing the vaccine to younger babies?

Neither of the swine flu vaccines used in the UK vaccination programme are licensed by the European regulators for use in babies under 6 months old.



Why should I get my child vaccinated?

Even if your child is healthy, it is important to get them vaccinated against swine flu. The vaccination will help:

- ✓ protect your child against swine flu now
- ✓ protect your family and other people who are close to your child
- ✓ protect your child against future waves of swine flu
- ✓ reduce the spread of the virus.

Parents should be contacted by their GP or local NHS. When you get the invitation, get your child vaccinated.

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www.leicestercity.nhs.uk
www.lcr.nhs.uk

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About this leaflet

All children over six months and under five years of age are now being offered the swine flu vaccine. This leaflet provides parents and carers with information about the vaccination.

How serious is swine flu?

For most people, swine flu is mild. It comes on quickly and generally lasts for around a week. Patients with swine flu typically have a fever or a high temperature (over 38°C / 100.4°F) and two or more of the following symptoms: unusual tiredness, headache, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath or cough, loss of appetite, aching muscles, diarrhoea or vomiting. Some people are more likely to be seriously ill. These can include young children over six months and under five years of age with or without underlying health conditions. Vaccination is important in protecting people from swine flu.

About the swine flu vaccine

There are two different brands of vaccine – Pandemrix and Celvapan. The majority of children are likely to be given Pandemrix. However, if they have had a confirmed severe allergic reaction to eggs, called ‘egg anaphylaxis’ they will be given Celvapan, which is not produced using eggs.

How many doses will my child need?

The dosage for children aged over six months and below ten years is one dose of Pandemrix (using half an adult dose) unless your child has a suppressed or lowered immunity system. These children should receive two doses of Pandemrix (using half an adult dose) given at least three weeks apart. Children who require Celvapan will need two doses given at least three weeks apart.

How can we be sure these new vaccines are safe and effective?

The European Medicines Agency carefully considered all the available evidence before the vaccine was licensed. In the UK, and elsewhere in Europe, swine flu vaccine has been used to immunise large numbers of people, including young children, many of whom have underlying health conditions.

Can the swine flu vaccine be given at the same time as other vaccines?

Yes, it is normal for a number of routine childhood vaccinations to be given at the same time, but they will probably be administered in different parts of the body.

Are there any side-effects?

All vaccinations can produce side-effects such as redness, soreness and swelling at the site of the injection. In some cases flu vaccines can cause fever, headache and muscle aches, but they are much milder than the flu itself and only last a day or so. If you think your child has experienced a more serious side-effect, please tell your GP and report it to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency at www.mhra.gov.uk/swineflu

My child has already had swine flu. Does he/she still need the vaccine?

Only a small proportion of swine flu cases are confirmed by a laboratory test, so most people cannot be certain they have had swine flu. Young children should still have the vaccine, unless they have had a positive laboratory test for swine flu. It is safe to be vaccinated even if your child has already had swine flu.

