# **Seasonal Flu 2023 FAQs - The influenza ‘flu’ vaccination**

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**Got a question that isn’t answered here?** Email flu.vacs@nottscc.gov.uk

## My doctor keeps hassling me even though I’ve had my flu jab at work. Can you tell them I’ve had it?

The County Council’s flu vaccination programme is an occupational scheme. We provide the same vaccinations as the NHS but as it’s classed as a private jab it isn’t passed on to your GP.

## Why can’t you offer Covid vaccinations at the same time as flu?

At the moment Covid vaccinations are only provided through the NHS and aren’t available for private occupational health programmes.

## Why are some staff eligible and others not?

Eligible staff have been identified by managers as those frontline staff who have regular contact with at-risk groups such as vulnerable older people, and adults or children with disabilities or certain medical conditions. Offering them a vaccination helps to protect our most vulnerable residents and the services we offer them.

Other people may be eligible through the [NHS flu vaccination programme.](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/)

## I had flu before and I wasn’t particularly ill, so why should I bother getting vaccinated?

The flu virus mutates every year which is why we need to update the vaccinations every year. Just because you weren’t very ill after catching a strain in the past, it doesn’t mean that you won’t be ill if you catch a different strain in the future.

We also know that, like Covid-19, some people can have flu with mild symptoms or in some cases no symptoms at all, but still have the potential to infect others who may develop a serious or life-threatening illness.

## I’m terrified of needles and injections but I’d like a flu vaccination – can you help?

We will do our best to help and support anyone who comes to one of the on-site clinics. We are working with experienced vaccinators who can answer any questions and allay any concerns.

The appointments are being offered at 5-minute intervals but if you’d like a bit more time we will do our best to accommodate any requests. Email us at flu.vacs@nottscc.gov.uk and we will do our best to help and give you some extra time if you need it.

## Why can’t you start sooner and offer clinics earlier in the year?

The vaccine is developed each year to tackle current strains so it’s made in time for the vaccination season. That means we can’t get the vaccines from the manufacturers and suppliers any earlier – our on-site clinics are scheduled as soon as we know the vaccines will be available.

## How else can I help support the flu programme?

We would welcome any help and support to encourage friends and colleagues to get their flu vaccination. Please feel free to talk with others about your own experience of getting the vaccination. It may help ease others’ concerns or provide reassurance that it’s the right decision for them.

You might ask the people you care about if they’ve had their vaccination. If they haven’t, signpost them to the intranet page or to their GP or local pharmacy.

If they’re worried about the vaccination you can also suggest that they look at the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/) for more information.

Everyone has the right to accept or refuse a flu vaccination and they should be provided with the right information to make an informed decision. It’s important that everyone understands the risk that flu poses and that the vaccine has been proved to be the safest and most effective way of preventing flu.

## I’m at an age where I have built up sufficient immunity to flu over the years so do I need it?

Flu strains change every year so it’s important to get your vaccination every year. The flu jab will only protect you for the current flu season, even if you’ve had flu or been vaccinated in the past.

## I’m fit and healthy already, would I benefit from a flu vaccine?

Healthy people can still develop severe complications as a consequence of flu and are advised to take up the offer of vaccination. You can also carry and pass the virus to others without having any symptoms yourself, so it’s especially important to be vaccinated if you are working with vulnerable people or have family or friends who are vulnerable.

## Does the vaccine give you flu?

It’s impossible to get flu from the flu vaccine because it doesn’t contain live virus. You might experience mild side-effects such as soreness, swelling or aching muscles following the vaccination, but this is usually an immune response to the vaccine and is nothing to worry about. It does take up to 14 days for the jab to work so you could catch flu before you’re protected. Getting vaccinated early in the flu season will protect you before cases of flu are high.

## I’ve heard stories about people who got the flu vaccine and then still got the flu. Does the vaccine work?

While no vaccine can offer 100% protection, flu vaccines are the easiest and most effective protection against flu. If you take up the flu jab offer, you will be better protected, less likely to become ill, and less likely to pass on the flu to others.

## If I get flu, can’t I just ask for some antibiotics?

Influenza is a virus and antibiotics do not work with viral infections. Preventing flu with vaccination is much easier than treating it.

## Do I have to wait between getting my flu vaccination & my Covid booster?

No need to wait - it’s fine to give flu & Covid vaccinations together, so as soon as you’re offered the flu vaccine you can have it, regardless of when your last Covid vaccine was. The sooner you’re vaccinated the sooner you’re protected!

## I don’t like injections. Will it hurt!?

Many people are hesitant to get vaccinated because they don’t like needles. Thankfully the reality is much less scary! The skilled nurses who provide vaccinations are specially trained to administer these vaccinations. They will provide a calm, friendly environment to talk through your concerns and will ensure you feel comfortable and confident.

This will be the fourth year we’ve offered clinics to eligible staff within the County Council and the feedback has been really positive. Here are just a few comments from your colleagues who had a flu vaccination last year:

* Really easy, very quick, far more convenient than going to my GP.
* Having a clinic at Trent Bridge House meant hardly took any time from working day to get vaccinated.
* I didn't have to wait long and was seen by a male vaccinator who put me at ease immediately as he was warm and friendly. I wasn't worried about it at all but I can imagine some people would have been and his approach was just right.
* The pharmacist who gave it, Dave, was very good making you feel at ease highly recommend.
* Staff booking in and nurse giving vaccinations were very kind, friendly and funny. Made the situation welcoming and pleasant.
* Very quick and simple. The Nurse was really reassuring, and it was painless.
* I really appreciated the ease of having an on-site appointment.

## How do I book for a free workplace flu vaccination clinic?

There’s a schedule of clinics and instructions about how to book on the [intranet](http://home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/wellbeing/work-support/flu-jab). Kays Medical will be delivering vaccinations at County Council work bases for eligible staff, so that you can have the jab during working hours.

If you don’t have access to the intranet, you can email flu.vacs@nottscc.gov.uk or call 0115 977 2130 to book an appointment.

## How do I request a free flu voucher?

If you think you are eligible, please follow the instructions on the [intranet](http://home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/wellbeing/work-support/flu-jab). You will need to give us your email address or a mobile number, which we will share with Boots, and they will then send you the voucher by text or email. Once you’ve got that, you can make an appointment at a participating Boots pharmacy.

Please make sure you do actually use the voucher – they are paid for in advance by the County Council and we cannot claim the money back once issued.

## How will I get the voucher?

Vouchers are emailed or texted to you directly, either at your work or personal email address or mobile number, whichever you prefer. If you don’t have an email address or mobile phone, you can ask your manager to request a voucher on your behalf.

## I’m not sure if I’ll go through with getting the flu jab. Should I still book a flu jab or request a voucher?

Participation in the Nottinghamshire County Council flu vaccination programme is completely voluntary - you should not feel obligated or under any pressure from managers or peers to participate. However, we encourage all frontline staff to be vaccinated as the evidence shows it is safe, effective, and beneficial.

If you would like more information before making your decision, please contact us at flu.vacs@nottscc.gov.uk or by calling 0115 977 2130 and we will try to provide further information in confidence.

When you’ve made your decision, you can book an appointment or request a voucher.

If you have any questions or concerns on the day of your vaccination, the vaccinator will be able to help.

## Is there an expiry date on the voucher?

Yes, vouchers expire on 31 January 2024 but the earlier you get your flu jab the better. There is a time window to get the vaccine, when we know that it’s most effective to protect people at the time flu is starting to circulate. The sooner you and the people around you are protected - so don’t wait!

## Can I ask for a voucher just in case I get flu? I won’t use it unless I need to.

The vaccination helps to stop people getting the flu and passing it on to other people. It doesn’t help or offer any protection once someone has already caught the virus. The vouchers are also paid for in advance so not using them takes away valuable resources, without offering any benefit to those people we care for.

## Do I need to make an appointment for a flu vaccination?

Yes, you need to make an appointment for a workplace flu jab, or if using a voucher, at a participating Boots pharmacy through their website – there will be a link on the voucher when you get it. We can do some drop-in appointments at the workplace clinics on the day – we can’t guarantee a vaccination if you haven’t booked but we’ll do our best.

## I think I may be eligible for a free flu jab though the NHS - what should I do?

If you are already eligible through the NHS because you are in an at-risk group or over 65, you can choose whether to get your vaccination at work or through your GP or pharmacy.

The most important thing is to get vaccinated though, so you can choose wherever is most convenient.

A list of those eligible for a free vaccination on the NHS can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-flu-vaccine/>.

## What happens to my data?

**Workplace sessions data**

For booking purposes, your name will be shared with a third party (Kays Medical), provider of the on-site flu vaccinations on behalf of NCC.

At the time of receiving your flu vaccination, you will be required to share personal data. The personal data will include: name, date of birth and details of any medical conditions including allergies. NCC will not hold, process or have access to any of this data. Kays Medical will only process your personal data in accordance with the Law and, in particular, the Data Protection Act 2018. The data will also not be used for any marketing purposes. For more information, please see [Kays Medical Privacy Policy](https://www.kaysmedical.com/privacy-policy/).

**Voucher scheme data**

For voucher booking purposes, your name and the email address and/or mobile number that you provide will be shared with a third party (Boots Pharmacies), who will then issue you directly by email with an electronic flu voucher. Boots will only process your personal data in accordance with the Law and, in particular, the Data Protection Act 2018. The data will also not be used for any marketing purposes.

For further information, please refer to the [NCC Corporate Privacy Notice.](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/global-content/privacy)