



Sussex Flu Vaccination Update

22 October

Free flu vaccine protects during pregnancy

The local NHS is urging pregnant people to get their free flu jab now, as during pregnancy there is a higher chance of developing complications from flu and can include bronchitis, a chest infection that can become serious and develop into pneumonia.

The Influenza Virus can also impact on unborn babies being born prematurely, with a low birthweight, and even lead to stillbirth or death.

Studies have proven it's safe to have the flu vaccine during any stage of pregnancy, from the first few weeks up to the expected due date. Those who have had the flu vaccine while pregnant also pass some protection on to their babies, which lasts for the first few months of their lives.

The vaccine does not contain any live viruses, so it cannot cause flu. Some people may get a slightly raised temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards, and may feel some soreness where injected.

Those who had the flu vaccine last year, either because they were pregnant or were in a vulnerable group need to have it again this year - the viruses that cause flu change every year. This means the flu and the vaccine this year may be different from last year.

Allison Cannon, Chief Nurse Officer for Sussex NHS commissioners said:

“Flu can cause harm to both mother and baby. The free flu vaccine is the very best protection for you and your unborn baby from the harms of flu.

“However fit and healthy you might feel, if you are pregnant you need the flu vaccine now. The flu vaccine is the safest way to help protect you and your baby against the flu virus. It's free because you need it. Pregnant people can get their vaccine from their GP, pharmacist or through their maternity service.”

“For any new mothers who are now in one of the eligible groups, please also make sure you receive the free flu jab this year. It is just as important now that your baby has arrived to protect you and it is safe if you are breastfeeding.”

GP practices and pharmacies are receiving batches of the vaccine during the flu season, and flu vaccination clinics are scheduled to coincide with these deliveries. This does mean some may have to wait longer than they would wish to attend flu clinics ([leaflet on why people may have to wait longer](#)). The local NHS is reassuring those eligible there is plenty of time for everyone to book and get their flu jab.

‘JUST’ THE FLU?



If you're pregnant, flu can harm you and your baby. The flu vaccine is your best protection.

JUST GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB

Ask your pharmacist, GP or midwife.



For a full list of priority groups and other information about this year's flu vaccine, visit www.nhs.uk and search for flu vaccine.

[Easy Read materials for people with a Learning Disability](#)

[Translated resources](#)