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December 2023

HSE Influenza Vaccination Campaign 2023/2024

Dear Principal,

All children aged 2-17 can get the free flu vaccine.

The nasal flu vaccine is available until the middle of February 2024 for children aged 2-17. Participating GP practices and Pharmacies are giving the vaccine for free.

It is given as a spray up the nose, there is no need for an injection. It is a safe, easy and pain free way to help protect children against flu this winter.

Flu can be serious in children

Children are twice as likely to get the flu than adults. While most children who get the flu will have mild symptoms, some children can get complications such as pneumonia or bronchitis and may need to go to hospital. Children, especially younger children, are also more likely than adults to get severe complications of flu.

Flu can cause serious illness in children, and children with chronic health conditions are most at risk of severe complications of flu.

Symptoms of flu in children include

- High temperature
- Headache
- Muscle pains
- Extreme tiredness (fatigue)

Children also carry the flu virus in their system longer than adults do. They can spread the flu virus easily to other children, in day-care centres and schools, and to older and vulnerable people around them.

Supporting the flu campaign this year

The flu vaccine is the best protection we have against flu. We would appreciate it if you could help to promote flu facts and the vaccine with parents. .

You may also find the following resources helpful:

- HSE flu website: www.hse.ie/flu. It also contains further information about the flu vaccines available this year (including the injectable flu vaccines for adults) and all those who are recommended the flu vaccine.
- Information leaflet for parents (in English and translations available on the flu website): <https://bit.ly/47EbLmy>
- Poster on the Children's Flu vaccine (in English and Irish translation available on the flu website): <https://bit.ly/3uEhM3S>

As always, we thank you for your support for the flu vaccination programme.

Yours Sincerely,

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