

## Influenza (Flu) Vaccine (Live, Intranasal)

Influenza (“flu”) is a contagious disease that spreads every year, usually between October and May.

Flu is caused by influenza viruses, and is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing, and close contact.

Anyone can get flu; it strikes suddenly and can last several days. Symptoms vary by age, but can include

- fever/chills
- sore throat, cough
- muscle aches
- fatigue,
- headache and runny or stuffy nose

Flu is more dangerous for infants and young children, people 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions or a weakened immune system are at greatest risk. The Flu vaccine can

- Keep you from getting flu and from spreading flu to your family and other people
- make flu less severe if you do get it

The **live, attenuated influenza vaccine** (called LAIV) may be given to healthy children.

It is sprayed into the nose, is painless and **does not cause flu**. It takes about 2 weeks for protection to develop, and protection lasts through the flu season.

Some people should not get LAIV because of age, health conditions, or other reasons. Please provide information on the consent form if the child:

- Has any allergies, including to eggs, or have ever had an allergic reaction to flu vaccine.
- Has any long-term heart, breathing, kidney, liver, or nervous system problems.
- Has asthma or breathing problems, or has had wheezing episodes.
- Is a child or adolescent who is receiving aspirin or aspirin-containing products.  
has a weakened immune system.
- Will be visiting someone, within the next 7-14 days, who requires a protected environment (for example, is receiving chemotherapy)

Sometimes LAIV should be delayed. This is usually if your child

- Is not feeling well. The vaccine could be delayed until they feel better.
- Has received any other live vaccines in the past 4 weeks.

### Risks of a vaccine reaction

With any medicine there is a chance of reactions. These are usually mild and go away on their own, but serious reactions are also possible.

Most people who get LAIV do not have any problems with it. Reactions to LAIV may resemble a very mild case of flu, problems that have been reported include

- runny nose/nasal congestion
- cough
- fever
- headache and muscle aches
- wheezing
- abdominal pain, vomiting, or diarrhoea

## **Problems that could happen after any vaccine**

Any medication can cause a severe allergic reaction this is very rare, estimated at about 1 in a million doses, and would happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination. As with any medicine, there is a very small chance of a vaccine causing a serious injury or death.

## **What if there is a serious reaction**

Look for anything that concerns you, such as signs of a severe allergic reaction, very high fever, or unusual behaviour. Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, and weakness. These would start a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

## **What should I do?**

If you think it is a severe allergic reaction or other emergency that can't wait, call 999.

## **How can I learn more?**

Contact us on 0300 123 5205 or visit our website [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/imms](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/imms)