



**Sussex**  
NHS Commissioners



# Sussex Flu Vaccination Update

30 November 2020

## Get protected from flu now if you have a long-term health condition

The NHS in the Sussex is reminding people with long-term conditions that this year it's more important than ever for them to have their free flu vaccination.

Research shows that if people get flu and coronavirus at the same time, they are more likely to be seriously ill or be admitted to hospital.

Catching flu is more serious for those with a long-term health condition. It can make the effects of their existing condition worse and can cause serious complications. Long term health conditions which can cause issues alongside flu include diabetes, a long term respiratory, heart, kidney, liver or neurological condition, a weakened immune system and obesity.

An average of 11,000 deaths occur annually due to flu-related complications. Of these deaths, many were in people with underlying conditions.

Flu is a highly infectious illness which spreads rapidly, even people with mild or no symptoms can infect others. If someone has a long-term condition, they're more vulnerable to the effects and could suffer more than most people if they catch it.

People with chronic heart disease are approximately 11 times more likely to die if they catch flu than individuals who have no other underlying health condition.

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

"If you have a long-term health condition it is really important you have your free flu vaccination to protect yourself from the flu virus.

"Long term health conditions include the following; diabetes, a long term respiratory, heart, kidney, liver or neurological condition, are immunosuppressed, morbidly obese or have problems with your spleen.

"There is a risk of serious complications from flu, like pneumonia, and end up in hospital. The flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from the flu.

"GP practices and pharmacies have worked hard to put social distancing and other measures in place so you can have the flu vaccination in a safe environment."

People with a long-term health condition should have received a letter to invite them for their flu vaccination and can speak to their GP to arrange an appointment.

The flu vaccine is offered free on the NHS to anyone with a serious long-term health condition, including:

- respiratory conditions, such as [asthma](#) (needing steroid inhaler or tablets), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), including emphysema and [bronchitis](#)
- [diabetes](#)
- heart conditions, such as [coronary heart disease](#) or [heart failure](#)
- being very overweight – [a body mass index \(BMI\)](#) of 40 or above
- [chronic kidney disease](#)
- liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)
- neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), or [cerebral palsy](#)
- a [learning disability](#)
- problems with your spleen, for example, [sickle cell disease](#), or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or taking medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)

All children who have long-term health conditions should be offered flu vaccination from the age of six months.

Chronic liver disease can affect the immune system and therefore people with this condition may be less able to fight off flu. Those with chronic liver disease are approximately 48 times more likely to die if they develop flu than individuals who have no other underlying health condition.

Chronic respiratory diseases make people more susceptible to the flu virus damaging their lungs. They are seven times more likely to die from flu than individuals without an underlying health condition.

Chronic renal disease can affect the immune system and therefore people with this condition may be less able to fight off flu. Those with chronic renal disease are approximately 19 times more likely to die if they catch flu than individuals who have no other underlying health condition.

# ‘JUST’ THE FLU?

**JUST GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB**

Ask your pharmacist or GP if you're eligible.

Flu  
vaccine **help us  
help you**

[Easy Read materials](#)

[BSL and other languages \(translated resources\)](#)