



LET'S TALK ABOUT THE FLU VACCINE

Why is the flu vaccine important?

Flu can be serious – In 2022, it caused over 4,800 deaths in Cheshire and Merseyside.

It is more than just a bad cold and can make people really unwell, especially if you're 65 or older, pregnant, or have a long-term health condition.

If that's you, you may be offered a free flu vaccine by the NHS to help keep you safe. The vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Not sure about the flu vaccine? That's okay, you're not alone. Let's talk about it. Here are some common concerns people have - and the facts to help you make an informed choice.

"Flu isn't serious" / "I'm healthy, I don't need it"

Flu can be serious, especially if you're in a high-risk group. Even if you feel fine now, the flu can hit hard. The vaccine helps your body build protection before the virus spreads.

"The flu vaccine gave me flu" / "It doesn't work"

The flu vaccine can't give you flu - it's made from a dead virus. Some people might feel a bit achy or tired afterwards, but that's a sign your body is building protection. The flu vaccine saves 6,000–10,000 lives each year in England.

"Is the vaccine safe?"

Yes. Like any medicine, there may be mild side effects — such as a sore arm or feeling a bit tired — but these go away quickly. The flu itself is much riskier, especially if you're in a group more likely to get seriously ill.

"I don't believe in vaccines" / "I'm scared"

It's okay to be unsure - there's a lot of confusing information out there. But vaccines are carefully tested, and flu vaccines have been used safely for decades. They're one of the best ways to stay protected.

"Is it halal / kosher?"

The adult flu vaccine does not contain pork gelatine and is considered halal and kosher. For children, the nasal spray version does contain a tiny amount of pork gelatine, but an injection is available instead if preferred. If you're unsure, your Imam or Rabbi may be able to offer advice.

"I stay healthy through diet, exercise, or faith"

That's brilliant — and keep it up! But even healthy people can get very sick from flu. The vaccine provides the best protection and works alongside the healthy things you're already doing.

"I'm pregnant and worried about my baby"

You're doing the right thing by thinking ahead. The vaccine is safe in pregnancy and helps protect both you and your baby — even for 6 months after birth. Flu can be dangerous in pregnancy, so the vaccine is the best way to stay safe.

"I'm worried about vaccine ingredients"

It's natural to want to know all parts of a vaccine are safe. The flu vaccine and its contents are tested to high safety standards. It only contains tiny, safe amounts of ingredients that help train your immune system - and nothing that affects your DNA. We come across these ingredients in similar amounts every day, like potassium in bananas!

"I'm scared of needles"

That's totally understandable - and you're not alone. Doctors and nurses can help by using numbing cream, relaxing techniques, or even just talking you through it gently. You can also ask for a quiet appointment time, or to bring someone with you.

"Aren't drug companies just making money?"

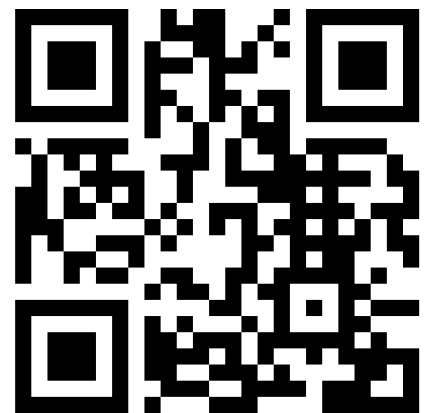
It's smart to ask questions. While companies do make money, vaccines in the UK are checked by independent scientists who don't work for drug companies. Every vaccine is tested for safety and effectiveness before it's given to people. If there's ever a concern, it's paused - like the MenC vaccine was in 2024, when scientists realised there was a more effective vaccine made by a different company.

STAY WELL THIS WINTER



WHERE CAN YOU GET THE FLU VACCINE IN CENTRAL LIVERPOOL?

You can book your flu vaccination through your GP practice. You can find a list of the GP practices, pharmacies and the Living Well Bus schedule and locations in the Central Liverpool area who deliver the free flu vaccine by scanning the QR code or visiting:



<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/flu>