



What is Flu ?



Flu is an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract. It is most common during the winter months.

People often describe colds as flu, but symptoms of flu come on very suddenly and are much more severe than a cold.

Flu symptoms are:

a high fever

shivering

headache

an aching body; and extreme tiredness

How is flu spread?

Flu is caught through droplets of saliva that spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can then be breathed in by other people or they can be picked up by touching surfaces, toys and equipment where the droplets have landed.

Children of 2, 3 and 4 years are now routinely offered flu vaccination. Pilot vaccination programmes for school aged children are taking place in some parts of the country.

Why are some children of school age offered flu vaccine?

If children suffer from certain types of illness then catching flu can be serious. These children may not be able to fight off 'flu as effectively as other children can or it might make their existing condition worse.

These conditions include:

severe asthma, diabetes and heart conditions and children who are immunosuppressed.

If you know of children in your school who suffer from these conditions please be aware that they are especially vulnerable and encourage them to seek advice on 'flu vaccination from their GPs.

Good hand hygiene by all is a great way of preventing most infection!