

If you work with poultry, read this leaflet now

YOU CAN GET THE FLU VACCINE IF YOU:

- spend a lot of time in areas where poultry are kept for rearing or egg production purposes
- handle live poultry
- catch poultry in poultry houses
- sort eggs in poultry houses
- clean poultry houses
- collect and remove poultry manure or litter from poultry houses
- slaughter poultry and remove the guts and other parts from dead poultry
- clean and disinfect live bird and evisceration areas in slaughter houses

Why are you being offered a flu vaccine?

You are being offered flu vaccine because you work with poultry. We want to avoid any possibility of you having ordinary flu at a time when you might come into close contact with a bird infected with avian (bird) flu.

If that happens, your body could make a new flu virus out of the ordinary human seasonal flu virus and the avian virus. This new virus could be very infectious to other people. The risk of this happening is very small, but you are being offered vaccine to further reduce that chance.

This vaccine will **not** protect you against avian flu. It **will** reduce your risk of getting the ordinary human flu that may be around this winter.

When should I have the flu vaccine?

You should have the vaccine now. If you are unwell and have a high temperature (39°C and above), you should wait until you feel better.

If you have already been vaccinated this year, you don't need to have it again until next autumn. If you have already had flu this winter you will still need the vaccine because there are several different types of human flu virus.

Can the flu vaccine cause flu?

No. The vaccine doesn't contain live viruses, so it can't cause flu.

Will there be any side effects?

Some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards, and your arm may feel a bit sore where you were injected. Other reactions are very rare.

You should not be vaccinated if you:

- are allergic to hens' eggs
- have had a serious reaction to flu vaccine in the past

- currently have flu symptoms, e.g. a temperature of 39°C and above. You can have the vaccine when you are better
- have already had a flu jab this year – but you should have it again next autumn.

There is no evidence of risk from vaccinating pregnant women, or those who are breast-feeding, with flu vaccine. All pregnant women should seek advice from their local doctor or practice nurse before being vaccinated.

For more information about the flu vaccine talk to the doctor or nurse offering you the vaccine.

How can I avoid getting avian (bird) flu?

Avian flu is mainly a disease of birds. Avian flu viruses very rarely cause illness in people, but you can reduce the risk by making sure you follow some simple hygiene measures whilst at work such as regularly washing your hands with soap and water. During an outbreak of avian flu you should carefully follow all health and safety advice to reduce the risk of you being exposed to the avian flu virus.

Advice is available on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety website www.dhsspsni.gov.uk, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development website www.dardni.gov.uk or the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland website www.hseni.gov.uk.