

# NASAL FLU PROGRAMME

Flu is a viral infection and a potentially serious disease. It affects the lungs and airways. Symptoms appear quickly and can include headache, fever, cough, sore throat and aching muscles and joints. In children vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain may also occur.

In pilot programmes, vaccinating all primary school children had a dramatic effect on the local health economy providing compelling evidence of the value of a comprehensive child flu immunisation programme.

## KILLER FLU

Seasonal influenza affects all age groups and causes considerable morbidity and mortality. One study found that in **one year in England & Wales**, as a result of flu-like symptoms, there were an estimated **779,000 – 1,164,000** GP consultations, **19,000 – 31,200** hospital admissions and between **18,500 – 24,800** deaths.

## IT DIDN'T WORK LAST YEAR!

Each year the strain match is highly effective, however, on rare occasions the strain may change slightly, the vaccine will still be highly effective in minimising the severity of the flu virus if this ever occurs.

## INGREDIENTS

The nasal flu vaccine contains hydrolysed gelatine which is used as a stabiliser. The gelatine comes from pigs, but very sensitive scientific tests have shown that no DNA from pigs can be detected in the nasal flu spray.

## NO NEEDLES

The flu vaccine for children is a nasal spray (sprayed into the nose), not an injection. It is a very quick and painless procedure.

## PURPOSE

The aim is to protect children and also people around them, particularly those at risk of complications of flu. If children get flu they can remain infectious for longer than adults (up to two weeks), and they are also more likely to pass on the infection. The best results have been achieved in areas of the UK where uptake of the vaccine is high.

## EVERY YEAR?

It is important to have a flu vaccine every year. This is because the flu virus is very variable and changes over time. Each year there are different strains around, and a new vaccine has to be prepared to deal with them.

## ELIGIBILITY

- All children aged 2, 3 or 4 on August 31 2017
- All children in Reception class and in school years 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the UK.
- Children in school years 5 and 6 will also be offered the vaccine in Scotland, Northern Ireland and other areas of the UK which ran pilot pilot flu vaccination programmes in previous years
- Children aged 2 to 17 who are 'at risk' from flu, such as children with long-term health conditions