

Fighting Flu. It starts with you!

The flu vaccine is available to **all** frontline health and social care workers and **all** NHS staff.



The Public Health team debunk five common myths about the flu vaccine

Getting your flu jab is your shield, protecting you from serious illness, reducing your risk of hospitalisation, and helping us all to safeguard our patients, colleagues, and loved ones.

However, in a recent study conducted by NHSGGC and Media Education, colleagues highlighted several myths around getting their flu jab.

Now, as part of [Staff Vaccination Fortnight](#), the Public Health team are here to address the top five myths about the flu vaccination and give you the truth behind the rumours.

Myth 1: "The flu vaccine gives you flu"

What staff said:

For a lot of people, there's a fear that the flu vaccine will give them the flu. Some staff also described feeling unwell after their flu vaccination and believed it had "given them the flu". Our report found there was limited understanding of how the flu vaccine works and the side effects.

The truth:

The vaccine helps **protect you** from getting the flu. It works by teaching your body's immune system how to protect itself from flu. Once you get the vaccine, it takes around 10 days for the vaccine to work. The flu vaccine itself cannot give you flu.

Myth 2: "I don't need the flu vaccine because I'm healthy and have a strong immune system"

What staff said:

"My immune system is good, so I don't want to damage my body." Some staff felt vaccination was unnecessary because they were healthy and rarely became ill.

The truth:

Flu doesn't discriminate, and people who are normally healthy can become very unwell with flu. The flu vaccine helps stop this.

If you do get the flu and have been vaccinated, the symptoms are likely to be milder

and not last as long. This will reduce your risk of needing to go to hospital. It also helps to reduce the spread of flu and may protect those around you from getting ill.

The flu vaccine isn't just about protecting yourself – it's about protecting your family, colleagues, loved ones, and most importantly, the vulnerable people we care for. Many people in our study described getting the flu vaccination as part of their professional responsibility.

Myth 3: "Handwashing, masks and PPE are enough"

What staff said:

Some colleagues said they relied on handwashing, masks and gloves to prevent transmission and therefore did not feel they needed the flu vaccine. The report found that some staff did not fully understand the risks of viral transmission, and some highlighted concerns that some colleagues underestimated the risk of passing flu to vulnerable people.

The truth:

Handwashing and PPE are important tools in our fight against infections. The vaccine remains the most effective way of limiting the spread of flu. We should use all the tools available to protect ourselves, our families and patients.

The flu is a virus, so is very infectious and easily spreads to other people. Flu is spread by germs from coughs and sneezes, which can live on hands and surfaces for 24 hours.

Vaccinated staff repeatedly described the flu vaccine as an important infection prevention measure.

Myth 4: "The flu vaccine doesn't work anyway"

What staff said:

Some staff questioned whether the vaccine was effective or felt there was little point because they had never had flu before.

The truth:

The vaccine helps protect you from getting the flu. The flu vaccine will stop many people from getting the flu at all, and when it doesn't, it still reduces how severe the symptoms are and means you're less likely to require hospital care. It also helps to reduce the spread of flu and may protect those around you from getting ill.

Flu vaccines help protect against the main types of flu viruses that are expected to be circulating in winter. You have to get vaccinated every year because flu viruses are constantly changing. A different vaccine is made every year to ensure the best protection against the latest types of flu.

Evidence in our study shows a positive relationship between care home staff being vaccinated and resident health outcomes, which is likely the case in other areas of NHSGGC.

Myth 5: "The flu vaccine is the same as the COVID vaccine"

What staff said:

The report found that some staff confused flu and COVID vaccinations when discussing concerns about side effects, safety and effectiveness.

The truth:

Flu and COVID are two separate vaccinations that treat different viruses. They are provided as two separate injections. COVID is no longer offered routinely to healthcare staff, unless eligible for another reason. You can find more information on the flu vaccine on [the NHS Inform website](#).

Remember...

[Staff Vaccination Fortnight](#) runs from Monday 14 to Sunday 27 September, making it easier than ever to get your flu jab.

Find the drop-in clinic that suits you on [the NHSGGC website](#).

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