

Public Health Commissioning  
London Region  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Wellington House,  
133-155 Waterloo Road,  
SE1 8UG  
14<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**Re: 'Flu vaccination for 2 and 3 year olds this winter 2020/21**

Dear childcare provider,

As winter approaches, I would be very grateful if you could remind parents that their 2 and 3 year olds are entitled to free 'flu vaccine on the NHS. This winter it is likely that flu and COVID-19 will both be circulating. Flu is a dangerous virus that can be harmful to children and kills thousands of people a year. Young children catch influenza very easily. Each winter on average 5-20% of adults will be infected with 'flu, whilst 30-50% of children are infected. Children also spread the infection for up to 7 days, which is longer than in adults. Vaccinating children reduces the risk of influenza for family members, childcare staff and other children.

This vaccine is provided by the child's GP practice. The vaccine is given as a nasal spray and protects the child against the four main strains of influenza predicted to be in circulation this winter. Vaccination against flu will reduce the levels of flu in the population and help reduce the burden on health services this winter.

All London general practices have adapted their delivery of vaccinations to ensure that they are safely vaccinating children in COVID-19 secure venues with social distancing, Personal Protective Equipment and infection control measures in place.

Although COVID-19 has introduced a 'new normal' of nursery and preschool with social distancing measures, 'bubbling' and infection control measures, children are still at risk of germs (virus and bacteria alike) spreading. Vaccination builds children's immunity to protect against illnesses. Please also check that children are up to date with all the other vaccinations that they would have been invited for as a baby, at 12 months old and at 3 years 4 months. For a checklist of the vaccines and the ages at which they should ideally be given, please visit [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations).

Thanking you in advance for your support,



Dr Catherine Heffernan  
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