



Media Release

For Immediate Release

NHS flu vaccinations to be available from North Yorkshire Community Pharmacies

This winter all adult patients who are eligible for NHS flu vaccinations will be able to have them **free** of charge at local community pharmacies in North Yorkshire.

Flu vaccinations are vital to protect people who would be at risk of health complications if they caught the virus and the NHS aims to vaccinate at least 75% of people who are considered to be in at risk groups. These include pregnant women, people aged 65 years or over, and people with certain medical conditions.

The NHS runs a national flu vaccination programme each year through GP practices. This year, to help boost the number of people receiving flu vaccinations, the NHS has agreed that all community pharmacies with private consultation rooms, which is the vast majority in North Yorkshire, will also be able to offer NHS flu vaccinations.

The pharmacies will be using the same vaccinations as those offered by GPs and they will be required to notify patients' GPs when they have administered the vaccinations.

North Yorkshire Pharmacists are trained healthcare professionals and many have been providing flu vaccinations for over five years, both privately and as part of local NHS services.

The accessibility of pharmacies, their extended opening hours and the option to walk in without an appointment has proved popular with patients seeking vaccinations.

Eligible adult patients are people aged 18 years and over at the time of vaccination. They include:

- people aged 65 years and over (including those becoming aged 65 years by 31 March 2016);
- pregnant women;
- carers;
- those in long-stay residential care homes;
- people aged from eighteen to less than 65 years of age with one or more of the following medical conditions:
 - chronic (long-term) respiratory disease, such as severe asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or bronchitis;
 - chronic heart disease, such as heart failure;
 - chronic kidney disease at stage three, four or five;
 - chronic liver disease;
 - chronic neurological disease, such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease, or learning disability;
 - diabetes;
 - splenic dysfunction; or
 - a weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or treatment (such as cancer treatment).

“Community Pharmacy North Yorkshire welcomes this flu vaccination service. It demonstrates that the NHS clearly sees the value that pharmacies can offer in developing new health services. As well as, the walk in no appointment accessibility, that in many cases is a 7 day a week service.

Thus North Yorkshire pharmacies by providing this service are making flu vaccinations more accessible and convenient to the public. Flu is a really unpleasant illness, particularly for the most vulnerable groups and it is essential that people take steps to protect themselves during the winter months. We urge those who are offered the free flu vaccination to visit their local Pharmacy early in the flu season. We also urge all health care workers to make sure they are vaccinated to protect themselves, their patients and their families.”

End

Editor Notes

Community pharmacists are regulated healthcare professionals. Their training includes a four-year degree along with a year working in practice followed by examinations. Pharmacists are experts in medicines and are regulated by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC).

There are 152 community pharmacies in North Yorkshire. 95% of the North Yorkshire population live within a 10 minute drive of a community pharmacy, and the vast majority have private consultation rooms. Pharmacies use these to provide a range of public health and other services including services to help people to get the most benefit from their medicines and to lead healthier lives.

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