**More serious side effects**

These are extremely unlikely to happen. A very small number of people may develop an anaphylactic reaction to the flu jab. This is an extreme allergic reaction and could happen if you are extremely sensitive to the flu jab or one of its constituents. This condition is characterised by rash, swelling of the lips, eyes, and tongue or throat causing difficulties in breathing or swallowing and it can result, if left untreated, in cardiovascular collapse and death.

Your pharmacist has been trained to administer treatment in the very unlikely event of this occurring. Anaphylactic reactions may happen very quickly, but sometimes can happen after several hours (up to 72 hours). Your pharmacist will ask you to remain in the pharmacy for a short time following your flu jab to ensure your safety.

Should you start to develop any symptoms as described above following the flu jab, contact NHS 111 (telephone 111) immediately and inform them that you have received a seasonal flu jab.

People with egg allergy should not be vaccinated using this type of vaccine as eggs are used in its production.

|  |
| --- |
| **Remember**  If you start to feel unwell after you have left the pharmacy and have any concern whatsoever, contact the pharmacist, your GP, or if out of hours NHS 111 (telephone 111).    Remember to tell them you have had a flu jab. |

**NHS seasonal**

**flu jabs at your local pharmacy**

**Information for patients**

|  |
| --- |
| Pharmacy contact details: |



* Please read this information carefully and ask to speak to the pharmacist if you have any questions.
* If you have any serious medical problems, please discuss them with the pharmacist to ensure influenza (flu) vaccination is appropriate and safe for you.

**What is seasonal flu?**

Seasonal flu occurs every year, usually in the winter. It’s a highly infectious disease caused by a number of flu viruses.

**What harm can seasonal flu do?**

People sometimes think a bad cold is flu, but having flu can be much worse than a cold and you may need to stay in bed for a few days if you have flu. Some people are more susceptible to the effects of seasonal flu. For them it can increase the risk of developing more serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia, or can make existing conditions worse. In the worst cases, seasonal flu can result in a stay in hospital, or even death.

**Seasonal flu jab**

The flu jab helps to protect you against seasonal flu. As with all vaccines this vaccination may not fully protect all persons who are vaccinated.

When a person is given the flu jab, the immune system (the body’s natural defence system) will produce its own protection (antibodies) against the disease.

None of the ingredients in the vaccine can cause flu. Flu is a disease that can spread rapidly and is caused by different types of strains that can change every year. This is why you are offered a flu jab every year. The greatest risk of catching flu is during the cold months between October and March. If you were not given a flu jab in the autumn, it is still sensible to be vaccinated up until the spring since you run the risk of catching flu until then.

The seasonal flu jab will protect you against the strains of virus contained in the vaccine from about 2 to 3 weeks after the injection. The incubation period for flu is a few days, so if you are exposed to flu immediately before or after your vaccination, you could still develop the illness.

The flu jab will not protect you against the common cold, even though some of the symptoms are similar to flu.

|  |
| --- |
| If you have a blood test within a few days of being given a flu jab, please tell the person taking the blood sample or your doctor. This is because false positive blood test results have been seen in a few patients who had recently had the flu jab. |

**Some common side effects you may experience**

Like all medicines, flu jabs can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them

You may experience some discomfort after vaccination. The injection site may swell, and become red. You might also get some hardening of the skin. Additionally you may experience headache, sweating, muscular pain, joint pain, fever, shivering, and or fatigue. These are all common side effects to this type of vaccine and usually disappear within 1-2 days without treatment. It is perfectly safe for you to take appropriate painkillers to help with these. Please ask your pharmacist which painkillers are best for you.

The flu jab is unlikely to affect your ability to drive or use machinery.