

Editorial copy for partners

Childhood flu

Parents of 2-5 year olds are being urged to act now to ensure their child is ready to fight flu this winter.

Following last year's bad flu season, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Scotland is encouraging parents to get their child vaccinated early, ahead of winter hitting.

The safe and effective nasal flu vaccine, available from GP practices from October, is the best defence against flu. Not only does it protect the child, but those around them who may be vulnerable to the virus.

It only takes a few minutes, and provides protection for around a year.

To date, more than 1.6 million doses of the nasal vaccine have been given to children as part of the Scottish childhood immunisation programme, and the vaccine will be offered to around 160,000 2-5 year olds this year.



Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Gregor Smith, said:

"Incidences of flu in children rose last winter, which is why we're urging parents to get their children ready to fight flu ahead of winter.

"Flu can be serious and can result in even healthy children being hospitalised. It's important for children to be vaccinated before winter fully sets in, as the virus can spread more easily when temperatures are low.

"The vaccine remains the best defence against flu, and I'd encourage parents not to delay in making an appointment with their GP. By everyone playing their part, we can stop the spread of flu this winter."

To find out more about the childhood flu vaccine and its benefits, visit www.readyforflu.scot or phone NHS Inform on **0800 22 44 88**.