



11 August 2020
Press release

Please be patient, we'll let you know about flu vaccinations for those aged 50 - 64

Issued on behalf of NHS North East Essex, NHS West Suffolk and NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk clinical commissioning groups and in partnership with the Suffolk and Essex local pharmaceutical committees

GPs and community pharmacists from north east Essex and Suffolk have welcomed plans to extend eligibility for the flu vaccination to those aged 50 to 64 years.

But, following a reported big increase in inquiries at GP practices, people in this age group are being asked not to book a vaccination appointment at this time. In line with national plans to protect the most vulnerable first, people aged 50 - 64 will be offered the vaccine later in the season so the NHS can first focus on those most at risk – including those aged 65 or over, pregnant women, young children, and those with long-term health conditions.

The flu vaccination offers an important health protection. Flu can lead to existing health conditions getting worse or the development of an illness such as bronchitis or pneumonia, or it could even be fatal. A vaccination helps protect the health of a pregnant mother and her child.

You can see the full list of those eligible for a flu vaccination [HERE](#)

Most GP practices and pharmacies will begin inviting those patients most at risk for a flu vaccination from September onwards, and it is anticipated those newly eligible aged 50 – 64 years will be invited for vaccination during November or December.

Dr Max Hickman, clinical vice chair of NHS North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “Extending the eligibility for flu vaccination is certainly a welcome move. It’s very important though that people understand the need for a balanced and timely approach. As practices start to receive supplies of vaccine, those most at risk will get protected first.”

Dr Juno Jesuthasan, a GP in Ipswich and a member of the clinical executive of NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “I urge people in the newly eligible age group not to expect a vaccination before late autumn at the earliest and to wait until they hear from their GP practice or more information is made available.

“We understand that people are keen to do what they can to protect their health during this time, but it is important GP practice staff are able to firstly focus on those people in our community who are most at risk of flu.”

Tania Farrow, pharmacist and chief officer, Suffolk Local Pharmaceutical Committee, said: “There is no doubt that the flu vaccination saves lives and the extension of eligibility is a very sensible action. Pharmacies and GPs will begin by vaccinating those individuals most at risk to protect them and to prepare the NHS for an undoubtedly busy winter.”

ENDS