

National flu immunisation programme for under-fives begins



An Edinburgh nurse today encouraged parents of 2-5 year old children to book an appointment for their child to get vaccinated against flu as the national immunisation programme gets underway.

Three year old Dhiha Kaur joined nurse Ruth Davies at Victoria Practice in Leith ahead of being vaccinated this month, to help spread the message.

The call comes as figures reveal that 43 per cent of 2-5 year old children living in the Lothians didn't take up the offer of the free flu vaccine in 2014.

For the first time, all parents of pre-school children have been contacted and encouraged to make an appointment with their GP or nurse to get their child vaccinated, in a bid to increase overall vaccine uptake.

Over 150,000 Scottish children aged between 2 –5 years old will be offered the vaccination by the end of 2015.

Children are two to three times more likely to be ill with flu than adults, and the simple nasal spray vaccine, which is quick to administer and pain free, will help ensure children are protected and are less likely to spread the dangerous flu virus to others.

Ruth Davies, nurse at the Victoria Practice in Edinburgh, said: "We are encouraging patients at our surgery who have 2-5 year old children to phone up and book a vaccination appointment for their child as soon as possible. We want to

ensure that as many young children in the region as possible are covered from flu throughout the winter months.

“All GP surgeries in Scotland are now vaccinating 2-5 year olds against flu and this year’s flu vaccine offers the best defence against the dangers of flu. It will not only protect children, but also reduce the risk of flu being spread to those who are more vulnerable.

“The nasal spray for children is painless and only takes a few minutes to be administered. It takes ten to 14 days to work and helps to protect against flu for about a year, so call your GP surgery to book an appointment today.”



PICTURED ARE 3 YEAR OLD DHIHA KAUR AND NURSE RUTH DAVIES AT VICTORIA PRACTICE IN LEITH.

Photos courtesy of Gareth Easton 07752666522