

# Reminder to get the Covid booster and flu vaccination

Those eligible for the free Covid-19 and flu vaccinations are being urged by The Scottish Government to get their jabs as winter sets in and hospitalisations increase.

The reminder comes as Public Health Scotland (PHS) data shows that in the week ending 11 December 2022, there were on average 735 patients in hospital with Covid-19, an 18.2% increase from the previous week.

Admissions for flu are also on the rise with the highest hospital admission rate noted in patients aged less than one year old (18.5 per 100,000).

Parents and carers are encouraged to get their children vaccinated as soon as possible if they haven't done so already. The flu vaccine for children is a painless nasal spray which will help protect them and reduce the risk of them spreading the virus to more vulnerable people.

The vaccines are safe, effective and offer the best protection to those most at risk of serious illness from Covid-19 and flu while also helping to protect the NHS at this, the busiest time of year.

Adults over 50 are entitled to get both free vaccines and further information on eligibility for each jab is available on the NHS Inform website.

Health Secretary Humza Yousaf said: “Uptake for the winter vaccine programme is very encouraging with Scotland delivering more jabs per head of the population among over 50s than any other UK nation. However, the number of hospitalisations from both Covid-19 and flu are on the rise.

“The vaccines help to prevent serious illness and the need for hospital treatment freeing up capacity as we move into what could be the most challenging winter in the history of our health and care service.

“We are concerned that flu-related hospital admissions have been rising, with admission rates highest among very young children, and we urge parents and carers to get their children vaccinated with the painless nasal spray offered to this group.

“As well as protecting the child, the vaccine helps to reduce the risk of children spreading flu to family and friends who are more vulnerable, which is especially important at this time of year when families are getting together more.”