

# **Flu is on the increase – call for more people to get vaccinated**

**Public Health Scotland (PHS) has published new data which shows that flu activity continues to rise steeply in Scotland, including an increase in the number of people attending their GP or being admitted to hospital.**

The figures, published today, show that there has been a 63% increase in laboratory-confirmed cases of flu across all age groups in Scotland in the past week, rising to 2,752 cases from 1,696 the previous week.

There are early indications that high levels of circulating flu are contributing to acute pressure on the health and care system, including an increase in GP consultations and hospitalisations.

GP consultation rates for influenza-like illness are at the highest rate observed since the 2017/18 winter season. Hospital admissions have risen by 65% from 705 last week to 1,163 in today's report.

Vaccination offers the best protection against serious illness from flu, however, in those with underlying health conditions who are under the age of 65 years in Scotland, over two thirds have not yet been vaccinated.

Dr Nicholas Phin, Director of Public Health Science at PHS, said: “Although we always expect to see increases in flu in winter, currently we are seeing particularly high levels of the virus circulating. This is a concern, as flu can lead to severe illness, hospitalisation, and even death, particularly among vulnerable groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, young children, and those with underlying health conditions.

“Vaccination is one of the best tools we have in protecting against serious illness from flu. If you’re eligible for a flu, or COVID-19 vaccine, it’s not too late to take up the offer and get protected. Please check with your local health board for details on how to arrange this.

“During this time of increased socialising, we urge everyone to take preventive measures to reduce flu, and other respiratory infections, being spread to others. If you have symptoms of flu or have a fever, you should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, especially people in hospital or those who are vulnerable to severe infections.

“We can all help prevent infections, like flu, from spreading by maintaining proper hand and respiratory hygiene. This includes covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, disposing of tissues responsibly, and promptly washing your hands afterwards.

“A&E services are exceptionally busy, so we encourage everyone to think carefully before attending if you have flu-like symptoms. Your local A&E is for emergencies, such as a suspected heart attack or stroke, severe breathing difficulties or severe bleeding. If your condition it is not life threatening, you should visit [nhsinform.scot](https://nhsinform.scot) first to get trusted advice quickly. For further support, call your GP or NHS 24 on 111.”

[Find out more about flu on NHS inform](#)