

Shedding of Influenza vaccine virus

We understand some parents/guardians are worried about the shedding aspect of the vaccination.

The vaccine is administered using a nasal applicator which delivers just 0.1ml (around 1/50th of a teaspoon) of fluid into each nostril. No 'mist' of vaccine virus escapes into the air and therefore other people in the room should not be at risk of "catching" the vaccine virus. The room or school in which administration of nasal influenza vaccine has taken place does not require any special cleaning afterwards.

In theory, healthcare workers could be exposed to the vaccine virus if it was accidentally released outside of the child's nose, but during the extensive use of the vaccine over many years in the UK and the USA, no transmission of the vaccine virus to healthcare workers has been reported to date.

The nasal spray vaccine has a good safety record and unvaccinated contacts are not at risk of catching flu from the vaccine, either through being in the same room where flu vaccine has been given or by being in contact with a recently vaccinated individual.

Although vaccinated children are known to shed virus for a few days after vaccination, it is less able to spread from person to person than the natural infection. The amount of virus shed is normally below the levels needed to pass on infection to others and the virus does not survive for long outside of the body. This is in contrast to natural flu infection, which spreads easily during the flu season.

Excluding children from school during the period when the vaccine is being offered, or in the following weeks, is therefore not considered necessary. The only exception to this would be the tiny number of children who are extremely immunocompromised (for example those who have just had a bone marrow transplant). These children are normally advised not to attend school anyway

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because of the much higher risk of being in contact with other infections, including the natural flu infection that spread in schools.

The information above has been used from the below documents

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614527/Flu_advice_for_headteachers.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-leaflets-and-posters>

For more information you can visit

www.departmentofhealth.co.uk
www.nhs.uk/vaccinations

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