

News



South Tyneside Council



December 14th, 2016

A PROGRAMME TO PROTECT SOUTH TYNESIDE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM FLU IS WELL UNDERWAY

Primary school children in South Tyneside are being protected from catching the flu this winter thanks to a vaccination programme.

All of the Borough's primary schools have agreed to take part in the scheme which has seen many youngsters receive the vaccine in the form of a nasal spray which protects them from infection.

The programme, that offers all children in Year 1-6 the option to receive the spray, including special schools, started in October and is due to finish this month.

Councillor Joan Atkinson, South Tyneside's Lead Member with responsibility for Children, Young People and Families, recently attended Bede Burn Primary School, Dene Terrace, Jarrow, to meet some of the pupils having the nasal spray.

"Flu is the cause of thousands of lost work and school days, so immunisation protects both health and the local economy," said Councillor Atkinson.

"The nasal spray vaccine is one of the most effective and least disruptive ways of vaccinating children and it is great news that we have had a 100 per of our primary schools commit to the programme."

Councillor Tracey Dixon, Lead Member for Independence and Wellbeing, said: "Flu can be a very unpleasant illness in children, as they suffer the same symptoms as adults, including fever, chills and aching muscles.

"The flu vaccination will not only help protect children from flu, but also reduce the chance of flu spreading to others."

It is being delivered by South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's school nursing service with children given the vaccine in the classroom or school hall to cause as little disruption as possible to the school day.



Melanie Johnson, Director of Nursing and Patient Experience for South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We are pleased to be involved with this vaccination programme which protects the children themselves and will also help to protect against the spread of flu.

"Young children's close contact with each other means they are more likely to transmit the virus to one another and to vulnerable people in their families, including infants and grandparents, who are more likely to end up in hospital with complications after contracting flu. The immunisation is safe, quick and painless."

Children who are in a clinical at-risk group are required to visit their GP to have the vaccine and children aged 2, 3 and 4 will be vaccinated at their GP's.

The Council is supporting the Stay Well This Winter campaign, which is aimed at reminding people - especially those with long-term health conditions and those over 65 - to be ready for the festive season and ward off common winter illnesses so they do not require a visit to the hospital.

See www.nhs.uk/staywell for more details about the flu and how you can protect yourself and your family from it.

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Caption: School nurse Claire Birks is pictured with nine-year-old Grace (front) looked on by Councillor Joan Atkinson and school nurse Sue Wyllie

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