Flu vaccine for children and adolescents under 16 years of age

Flu (influenza) is a common infectious disease among children. The vast majority of children cope well with flu, but in a small number of cases the infection can lead to complications such as severe pneumonia and the worsening of an underlying medical condition. Hospital admission may be necessary in cases of severe flu or complications.

As with adults, children with certain medical conditions are at somewhat greater risk of becoming seriously ill from flu. This also applies to children born prematurely until they reach the age of 5. Annual flu vaccination is recommended for these risk groups.

For children, this includes:

- chronic heart or lung disease (including asthma)
- chronic neurological disease or injury (for example, epilepsy)
- a weakened immune system due to illness or treatment
- liver or kidney failure
- diabetes (especially if blood sugar levels are poorly controlled)
- severe obesity
- another serious or chronic illness where flu poses a serious health risk, following an individual assessment by a doctor
- children born prematurely, particularly those born before week 32 of pregnancy, from 6 months of age (chronological age) up to 5 years.

Flu vaccines for children

Flu vaccination is the most effective way to prevent flu. The vaccine is given annually because flu viruses are continually evolving and the vaccine provides protection for a limited period. Flu vaccines have been used for many years, and there is extensive knowledge about the side effects that may occur. The vaccines very rarely cause serious side effects. Side effects mainly consist of reactions at the injection site or short-term malaise, such as muscle aches or a mild fever. Two types of flu vaccine are currently approved for children in Norway: an inactivated injectable vaccine and a live attenuated nasal spray vaccine (Fluenz).

Inactivated injectable vaccine

Approved from 6 months of age. Contraindications include a severe reaction to a previous dose of the same vaccine, a severe immediate allergic reaction to eggs, a known allergy to other ingredients in the vaccine, and an acute infection with a fever above 38 °C.

Live attenuated nasal spray vaccine

Approved for children aged 2-17 years. Contraindications include severe asthma or active breathing difficulties, use of acetylsalicylic acid preparations, untreated craniofacial abnormalities, clinical

immunodeficiency, severe allergy to ingredients in the vaccine, and an acute infection with a fever above 38 °C.

For children aged 6 months to 9 years who have not previously had flu or received a flu vaccine, two doses of flu vaccine at least 4 weeks apart are recommended. You can read more about the vaccines at www.fhi.no/en/va/vaccines-for-adults/.

Before vaccination

Vaccination is voluntary. Children under the age of 16 must have consent from their parents/guardians. Where parental responsibility is shared, both parents/guardians must consent. Children under 16 are also entitled to receive information and to be consulted according to their age and maturity. Tell the vaccinator if your child has previously had a severe allergic reaction to a flu vaccine or an acute allergic reaction to eggs.

People who have had a severe immediate allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock after consuming egg protein, or a severe immediate allergic reaction to a previous dose of flu vaccine or another substance, should be vaccinated with enhanced anaphylaxis preparedness if they need a flu vaccine.

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Child's name:	Date of birth:

I/we would like my/our child to be vaccinated against flu: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Parents/guardians with parental responsibility:

Parent/guardian 1:

Full name (please write clearly): _____

Signature: _____

Telephone number: _____

Parent/guardian 2:

Full name (please write clearly): _____

Signature: _____

Telephone number: _____

Relevant health information about the child:
