

Make sure you're protected against flu – get your jab now

The NHS in south east Essex is reminding people to be on the lookout for invitations to get their flu jab if they're in the 'at-risk' groups.

The invitation letters, from our local GPs, are being sent to adults aged over 65; those with long-term health conditions such as severe asthma or heart disease; carers; pregnant women; children aged two to eight and other at-risk groups.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of people see their GP with flu-like symptoms and tens of thousands are hospitalised because of flu. In south east Essex 115,000 in at-risk groups are eligible for a free flu vaccination. Last year only 57% of the eligible individuals went for their vaccination.

Symptoms of flu can be very unpleasant, last for several weeks and lead to more serious complications like pneumonia or bronchitis for those with underlying health conditions, and in some cases it can even lead to death.

Tricia D'Orsi, Chief Nurse for NHS Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "Flu is a highly contagious illness, which can spread rapidly through local communities. It can cause serious complications for at-risk groups, including pregnant women, the elderly and people with long-term health conditions.

"If you are eligible for the free flu vaccination, make sure you act on your letter from your GP and get the jab – please don't ignore it. Having a flu jab will protect you and others. Contact your GP practice if you believe you are eligible for the jab but haven't received an invite."

Although it's not possible to know which strains of flu will circulate each winter, the flu vaccination is still the best protection against an unpredictable virus, which can cause severe illness and deaths amongst vulnerable groups.

In some instances, our GP practices may text you instead of sending a letter.

For more information visit [nhs.uk/staywell](https://www.nhs.uk/staywell)