

## **“Parents of two and three year olds, get them protected against flu this winter” says CMO Frank Atherton**

All children aged two and three years olds (age on 31 August 2017) are eligible for a free nasal spray flu vaccine at their GP surgery each winter.

The vaccine has been offered to eligible children in reception class and school years 1 to 4 in primary school. Parents and guardians are required to give consent before their child receives the flu nasal spray vaccine in school.

The nasal spray vaccine provides good protection for children against influenza and is most effective if given before flu starts to circulate. This particular vaccine has a short shelf life and parents are urged to vaccinate their two and three year olds as soon as possible.

Dr Atherton said:

“We know that children are super-spreaders of germs.

“Illnesses like flu spread easily within families and because of the nature of nurseries, playgroups and the school environment, toddlers and children are often in very close proximity to each other, where they are especially susceptible to any circulating germs.

“Young children are at risk of serious complications of influenza, their immune systems are not yet fully developed so they can’t fight off infections, such as flu, as well as older children and adults.

“That is why I am urging two and three year olds to get vaccinated. It will help protect them from the flu and stop it spreading to family and friends in the wider community this winter.”