Vaccines

What is a vaccine?

A vaccine is medicine that helps your body to fight an infection in the future.

A vaccine works by teaching your body's immune system how to fight the infection.

Your immune system is how your body fights off infections, like a cold or the flu.

Your immune system learns how to fight the infection without you getting very poorly.

Vaccines can help to keep you and others safe and help stop you getting very unwell from illnesses.

People on the learning disability register can get a free flu vaccine.

You do not have to have a vaccine because you are on the GP learning disability register, but you get the choice.

If you are not sure about having a vaccine, people can support you to get more information.

If you are not able to make the decision for yourself, other people will help you to decide if you should have the vaccine

This might be staff that support you, a doctor or family member.

If you are a family carer, you can also get a free flu vaccine.

How do I know if a vaccine is safe?

The Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) makes sure that vaccines work well and are safe to use.

All vaccines in the UK have been checked by the MHRA which means that they are as safe as possible to use.

Are there any side effects?

All medicines can have side effects.

You might feel poorly after having a vaccine.

You will be given information about the vaccine you have had, how to look for side effects and what to do if they happen.

What should I do if I have allergies?

It is important that you tell the person doing the vaccination if you have any allergies before you have your vaccination.

For more information about vaccines go to:

[Vaccine reasonable adjustments page](#)

or [the flu jab page](#)

For more information or help:

Speak to your local learning disability team or learning disability nurse if you have one.

Speak to an organisation in your community that you trust.

Call the Mencap Learning Disability Helpline on 0808 808 1111.

Or [fill out the online contact Mencap form](#).

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