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Did you know....?  * Respiratory infections over the last five years have been one of the top five reasons for sickness absence in the UK (ONS) * Locally, in 2022-2023 just over 600,000 fit notes were issued for respiratory infections permitting at least five days absence from work * Every year, flu strains change, making it essential to get vaccinated annually * The flu vaccine is carefully updated each year to match circulating viruses * Getting vaccinated not only protects you but also those around you, particularly individuals who are more susceptible to serious flu-related complications, such as older adults, people with chronic medical conditions, and pregnant women * There are a number of providers selling workplace flu vouchers to help protect employees from flu  Flu prevention tips in the workplace In addition to getting vaccinated, you can take simple yet effective measures to prevent the spread of flu:   * Practice good hygiene by washing hands regularly with soap and water * Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and dispose of tissues in waste bins promptly * Avoid close contact with people who are unwell * Stay home if you experience flu-like symptoms to protect others * Wipe desks, equipment and office surfaces with antibacterial wipes every day   Remember, the flu vaccine is one of the best ways to protect your health this season. Stay informed, get vaccinated, and encourage others to do the same  For more information including what to do if an employee has respiratory infection click here [Government guidance on reducing the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Freducing-the-spread-of-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19-in-the-workplace%23risk-assessment/1/01000193722c59b9-57f9a6c1-6e58-4719-b740-a7c8ca3fe9fe-000000/38xEpgkRCuQrOm_FD16TaZWoYsi5q0t1vhrsXDhI5Wc=380)   |  | | --- | |  |  Service offer spotlight  |  | | --- | | Flu vaccination The NHS is running a free flu vaccination programme in 2024. People of working age qualify for a free flu jab if they are:   * Pregnant * Certain health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease * A carer for someone who might be at risk if they fall ill * Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals * Frontline health or social care workers (NHS or other providers) * Aged 65 or over   Employees who are eligible for a free NHS flu vaccine can book an appointment through their GP, local pharmacy, the NHS app or online [Book, change or cancel a free NHS flu vaccination at a pharmacy](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fwww.nhs.uk%2Fnhs-services%2Fpharmacies%2Fbook-flu-vaccination%2F/1/01000193722c59b9-57f9a6c1-6e58-4719-b740-a7c8ca3fe9fe-000000/APeIkUdLiq-FNYPCbwR0bM5YRbC-feejTsDTxa6Um-g=380)  For those not eligible, many pharmacies and private healthcare providers offer the vaccine for a fee. Check with your employer to see if workplace flu vaccination options are available. |  |  | | --- | |  |   Campaigns   |  | | --- | |  |  |  | | --- | | Dry January 2025 Take on 31 days alcohol-free with Alcohol Change UK, a leading UK alcohol charity for a total body and mind reset.  From better sleep and a mental health boost, to saving money and time - there's a whole lot to gain. For more information [Dry January](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Falcoholchange.org.uk%2Fhelp-and-support%2Fmanaging-your-drinking%2Fdry-january%25C2%25A0/1/01000193722c59b9-57f9a6c1-6e58-4719-b740-a7c8ca3fe9fe-000000/Lo_0qMRIugO7_tuAhMY1oJ57XLwC8dpr9B1G5wMIVmI=380) |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Time Gentlemen Please Supporting men make healthier choices with alcohol designed to help, not judge.  Whether people are concerned about excessive drinking or seeking ways to go easy on alcohol, this campaign is designed to signpost people to local and national services that can support them on their journey. For more information [Time Gentlemen Please](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fwww.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk%2Fnews%2Farticle%2F988%2Ftime_gentlemen_please_%25E2%2580%2593_new_campaign_launched_to_help_men_develop_a_healthier_approach_to_alcohol/1/01000193722c59b9-57f9a6c1-6e58-4719-b740-a7c8ca3fe9fe-000000/f5ntOvikQ5F8VbcoEtw_2o_7uUH_NqsnMO6iufwKNjM=380) |  | [Time Gentlemen Please](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fwww.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk%2Fnews%2Farticle%2F988%2Ftime_gentlemen_please_%25E2%2580%2593_new_campaign_launched_to_help_men_develop_a_healthier_approach_to_alcohol/2/01000193722c59b9-57f9a6c1-6e58-4719-b740-a7c8ca3fe9fe-000000/AoYxi4D03z4tRT2k1q0kZ5UnvnQTzcyY_WJOweeATiE=380) |  |  | | --- | |  |   Thank you for reading our newsletter. If you would you like to be added to our mailing list or for more information on:   * [Free training and workshops](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fwww.milton-keynes.gov.uk%2Fhealth-and-wellbeing-hub%2Fworkplace-health-and-wellbeing-across-milton-keynes-bedford-borough-and-1/1/01000193722c59b9-57f9a6c1-6e58-4719-b740-a7c8ca3fe9fe-000000/xCv4XG1b1paUn0yVAtU7AqApJXHZkkrEonq6Dt5_Gf0=380) on a range of health and wellbeing topics * A range of [information and resources](https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fwww.milton-keynes.gov.uk%2Fhealth-and-wellbeing%2Fworkplace-health-and-wellbeing-resources-and-services/1/01000193722c59b9-57f9a6c1-6e58-4719-b740-a7c8ca3fe9fe-000000/2kibPxWuGrmVdfA8LdLFRcHvsqvM7PTdXnlQ8SzFoes=380) covering all aspects of workplace health   Please email the Workplace Health Team at [public.health@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:public.health@milton-keynes.gov.uk) | | | |