HERSCHEL MEDICAL CENTRE

PATIENT HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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NEW SEASON, NEW SKIES: GET READY EARLY

Flu vaccinations & back-to-school health checks — a message for our Herschel Surgery patients

🌬 SEPTEMBER SKIES, TWO CENTURIES AGO

As Slough's nights lengthened each September, William Herschel's real stargazing season began — but not with the telescope pointed up. First came the unglamorous work: cleaning mirrors, testing mounts, calibrating instruments, so that the moment the sky was clear, he was ready. It's the same principle behind this month's message. Flu vaccines take around two weeks to build your protection, and school routines settle best when they're set up before term properly gets going. A little preparation now saves a lot of catching up later.

WHY GETTING AHEAD MATTERS

- **Flu vaccinations start on 1 September** for pregnant women and children aged 2–16 (most school-aged children are vaccinated at school) — other eligible groups can pre-book now ahead of the 1 October start.
- **Adults aged 65 and over, anyone aged 6 months–64 with a long-term condition** (such as asthma, diabetes, heart or kidney disease), care home residents, carers, and frontline health and care workers are all eligible this autumn.
- Last winter's flu vaccination programme is estimated to have prevented **over 100,000 hospital admissions** — protection that matters for you and eases pressure on local NHS services.
- Flu activity typically peaks in December and January, and vaccine protection takes about two weeks to build — **getting vaccinated early gives your body time to be ready** before the virus starts circulating.
- Term time means more close contact indoors, and **young children are some of the biggest spreaders of flu within a household** — vaccinating them protects the whole family, not just them.
- For children and young people with asthma, the return to school is **one of the highest-risk times of year for flare-ups** — cold air, new triggers, and forgotten inhalers are common culprits.

YOUR MISSION, HERSCHEL-STYLE

You don't need a telescope for this one either — just a few things ticked off before the term and the cold snap arrive:

- **Book or accept your child's school flu vaccination**, or book your own flu jab with us at reception or via the NHS App.
- **Check your child's asthma inhaler technique and expiry date** before term starts — bring them in for a quick review if it's been over a year.
- **Catch up on any missed childhood vaccinations**, including MMR, before classroom mixing begins — ask reception to check your child's record.
- **Reset bedtime and morning routines a week early** rather than on the first day — small daily adjustments, repeated, make the biggest difference.
- **If you're 65+, pregnant, or living with a long-term condition, pre-book your flu appointment now** so you're covered before winter viruses start circulating.

Prepared before the sky was ready. Protected before winter arrives.

Book your flu vaccination or school health check today with us at reception or via the NHS App — Herschel Surgery, Slough

Sources: NHS England, "Flu and COVID-19 Seasonal Vaccination Programme"; NHS.uk — for general information only, not a substitute for personalised medical advice.