

What happened?

Pennygate Medical Centre took a different approach to encouraging children to have the flu vaccination this year.

The practice extracted the relevant patient list from the practice system. They then sent out a party invite via text and letter. Staff dressed up on the day and helped by playing with the children. PPG members directed patients and children all afternoon. There was an area put aside in the practice for the following activities:

- Face painting
- Colouring
- Crafting
- Handprint reindeer pictures
- Mince pies and orange (Given to children by their carers in case of allergies)
- Christmas music
- Balloons and treats

The PPG did a great job and were on hand all afternoon to steer patients in to see Father Christmas and to have their vaccination.

The Benefits

If children get their vaccinations it will help prevent them getting ill which means they won't require urgent medical appointments or won't attend A&E, which sometimes happens when parents are really concerned about their children. Small children also pass their germs onto parents and grandparents - so less germs are passed keeping older generations well.

Young patients loved the party; they were all very relaxed and happy and interacted well with the practice staff. Practice staff and PPG members also enjoyed the afternoon and interacting with the children and carers.

Going forward they feel sure that these children will have no fear of their friendly and welcoming GP practice. The party was from 3pm to 5pm and by the end had vaccinated 60 children said Practice Manager Sarah Gray.



How can you do it?

Involve the PPG in the planning for Flu season as early as possible. Recognise them as a key part of your practice team and allow them to get involved with your Flu clinics if they want to. Ask the PPG for ideas on how to increase uptake and what role they could play.

The PPG took the opportunity to ask the parents and grandparents accompanying the children if they would like to join Pennygate PPG to help the practice and to help shape/improve their services.

It was a lot of hard work before during and after [clean-up] but all practice staff said they wanted to do something like this again—perhaps a Halloween party next year.

Parents feedback.

The parents who brought their children along were absolutely delighted with the event. A couple of parents passed on their thanks to the practice. One mum said that her little girl didn't like going to the practice for this last year and had 'screamed the place down' but this year she was all smiles and had her vaccination with no problems.

To consider

If you are planning to take photographs make sure you get consent from any parents/guardians. Father Christmas was played by a relative of one of the practice staff and was DBS checked.

General Health Information:

Flu is a very unpleasant illness which can have potentially serious complications, such as bronchitis and pneumonia, which could be life threatening for any age group. The NHS choices webpage states that healthy children under the age of 5 are more likely to be admitted to hospital with flu than any other age range. Giving the flu vaccine to children also prevents the spread of the virus to their family, friends, carers and the wider population through herd immunity.

Very Well done to all Pennygate staff and the PPG!



Many thanks to Pennygate Medical Centre PPG members (pictured) for sharing this case study.

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