

Influenza

What if your child is allergic to latex?

There is no latex in the influenza vaccine packaging.

What are possible side effects of this vaccine?

There can be side effects with this vaccine. Reactions that do occur are usually mild. For a day or two, some children may:

- have mild pain and/or swelling where the needle was given.
- be irritable and/or fatigued.
- have mild fever, muscle aches and pains.
- some people have reported red eyes, runny noses and shortness of breath after receiving influenza vaccine. This was usually mild and went away within 24 hours.

As with any immunization, unexpected or unusual side effects can occur. Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are rare.

What should you do if your child has a reaction to the vaccine?

- For pain or swelling where the needle was given, place a cool damp towel on the area.
- For pain or fever, give acetaminophen (also called Tylenol® or Tempra®) as directed on the container.

NOTE: Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or Aspirin®) is not recommended for persons less than 18 years of age because of the risk of Reye's syndrome.

- Call your local public health nurse if you have questions or if there is an unusual reaction to the vaccine.

Talk to a public health nurse or doctor before getting this vaccine, if your child:

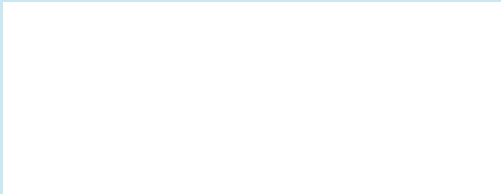
- is sick now with something more serious than a cold.
- has severe allergies to any part of the vaccine.
- is severely allergic to any foods, drugs, bee stings, etc.
- has a weakened immune system.

Influenza vaccine should not be given if your child:

- has had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine in the past.

For more information:

Call your local public health office.



Important information about this vaccine

Influenza vaccine for children



Immunization Information

What is Influenza?

Influenza is an infection of the respiratory tract (nose, throat and lungs) that is caused by a virus. It spreads easily from person to person through sneezing and coughing, and sometimes through objects that have been sneezed or coughed upon. Influenza is often mistakenly used to describe other illnesses like colds or “stomach flu”.

What are the symptoms of Influenza?

Persons with influenza may feel tired and weak and can experience fever, headache, chills, muscle aches, cough, sore throat, runny nose, and loss of appetite. Children may also experience nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, and occasionally, middle ear infection. These symptoms are rare in adults with influenza. Complications such as pneumonia, and even death, are more common in younger children, the elderly, and persons with health problems.

How can Influenza disease be prevented?

- Get the influenza vaccine every year. Influenza virus can change from year to year so a yearly shot is important.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water.
- Eat nutritious food and get a good night’s sleep to stay as healthy as possible.

Who should receive Influenza vaccine?

Healthy children aged six to 23 months are eligible to receive this vaccine, since they are at increased risk of hospitalization related to influenza compared to older children and young adults.

- If a child is less than nine years old and has never received influenza vaccine before, two doses of vaccine are required, four weeks apart.
- The second dose is not needed if a child has received one or more doses of influenza vaccine during a previous influenza season.
- Currently available influenza vaccines are not very effective in children less than six months of age.

Other groups should also receive this vaccine, including children who are at risk for developing complications from influenza and people who could spread influenza to those at high risk of developing complications.

Children at high risk include those:

- with chronic pulmonary disorders and cardiac disorders severe enough to require regular hospital or medical care.
- with chronic conditions such as diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases, cancer, renal disease, anemia, hemoglobinopathy, immunodeficiency, immunosuppression, and children who are HIV positive.

- six months to less than 18 years old with chronic conditions treated for long periods with acetylsalicylic acid (ASA).

People capable of transmitting influenza to children at high risk include:

- health care workers
- all household contacts of children at high risk, including household contacts of children less than twenty-four months of age
- pregnant women in their third trimester if they are expected to deliver during influenza season, as they will become household contacts of their newborn
- those providing **regular** child care in or out of the home to children less than 24 months of age.

Is Influenza vaccine safe?

Yes. You cannot get influenza from the vaccine. In Canada, vaccines must undergo laboratory and field-testing, and pass a rigorous licensing procedure with the federal government before they are introduced. Once a vaccine is approved, every lot is tested for safety and quality. In addition, side effects are continuously monitored.