

FAQ *Frequently Asked Questions* About Flu Vaccines



What should I know about the influenza vaccine?

- You **cannot** catch the flu from the influenza vaccine. Flu vaccines are made from influenza viruses that have been destroyed.
- A new vaccine is developed each year to prevent new strains of flu. The vaccine recommended for the 2007-2008 season includes A/Solomon Islands/3/2006 (H1N1 strain), A/Wisconsin/67/2005 (H3N2 strain) and B/Malaysia/2506/2004.
- **This vaccine does not provide protection for the Avian/Bird Flu.**
- The vaccine begins providing protective effects after about one to two weeks.
- No vaccine is 100% effective, but generally the flu vaccine protects most people. The flu shot will not protect you from other viruses that also circulate during flu season.

Who should receive the vaccine?

Anyone who wants to lower their chances of getting the flu should be vaccinated.

People in high risk groups who should receive the vaccine include:

- All children 6 to 23 months of age
- Persons 65 years or older
- Women who will be pregnant during flu season
- People who live or work in facilities in close proximity to many other people (nursing homes, dormitories, child care centers, schools, large companies, group homes, etc.)
- Persons with heart or lung disease who are at risk of severe flu illness
- People who have required regular medical care or were hospitalized during the previous year because of a metabolic disease (like diabetes), anemia, asthma, chronic kidney disease or a weakened immune system
- Physicians, nurses, etc. (including family members) who have extensive contact with high-risk patients

Who should not receive the vaccine?

Those people who should not receive the vaccine include:

- People allergic to eggs, chicken or chicken feathers
- People who have had an allergic reaction to the flu vaccine in the past
- People who are ill and have a fever.
- Women who are or may be pregnant, without first consulting with their physician
- People with heart or lung disease who are at risk of severe flu illness
- People who developed Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting a flu vaccine previously (Currently there is no evidence that the flu vaccine increases the risk for GBS recurrence in people with prior GBS unrelated to influenza vaccination.)
- Children less than 6 months of age
- People allergic to thimerosal (a mercury-based preservative used in vaccines)

What are the risks and side effects?

Most people who receive the vaccine either have no, or only mild reactions. Your risk of injury or death from a rare allergic reaction is far less risky than complications brought on by influenza.

- The worst side effect is likely to be a sore arm, lasting 1 to 2 days.

For further information, please see www.cdc.gov or consult with your physician.

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