

Prevent influenza!

Reduce the risk of getting influenza or spreading it to others by following these guidelines:

- ✓ Get an influenza vaccine
- ✓ Wash your hands regularly
- ✓ Promptly dispose of used tissues in the waste basket or garbage
- ✓ Cough and sneeze into your shirt sleeve rather than your hands
- ✓ Stay home when you are ill



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Would you like more information about influenza?

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INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINE

2018-2019

What is influenza?

Influenza, often called “the flu”, is an infection of the upper airway caused by an influenza virus.

Getting sick with influenza also puts you at risk of other infections. These include viral or bacterial pneumonia which affect the lungs. The risk of complications, which can be life-threatening, is greater for seniors 65 years and older, very young children, and people who have lung or heart diseases, certain chronic health conditions, or weakened immune systems.

Healthy pregnant women in the second half of their pregnancy are at greater risk of being hospitalized following infection with influenza virus.

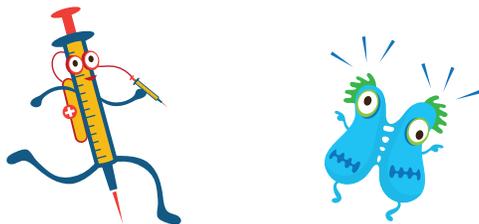
In Canada, thousands of people are hospitalized and may die from influenza and its complications during years with widespread or epidemic influenza activity.

How does influenza spread?

Influenza spreads easily from person to person through coughing, sneezing, or having face-to-face contact.

The virus can also spread when a person touches tiny droplets from a cough or a sneeze on another person or object and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

An infected person can spread the influenza virus even before feeling sick. An adult can spread the virus from about 1 day before to 5 days after symptoms start. Young children may be able to spread the virus for a longer period of time.



What are the symptoms?

Influenza symptoms can include fever, headache, muscle pain, runny nose, sore throat, extreme tiredness, and cough. Children may also experience nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Although infections from other viruses may have similar symptoms, those due to the influenza virus tend to be worse.

Symptoms can begin about 1 to 4 days, or an average of 2 days, after a person is first exposed to the influenza virus. Fever and other symptoms can usually last up to 7 to 10 days, but the cough and weakness may last 1 to 2 weeks longer.

What is an inactivated influenza vaccine?

The inactivated influenza vaccine is safe. It contains killed influenza viruses that cannot cause the flu. Common reactions to the vaccine include redness, soreness or swelling where the shot was given. These reactions may last 1 to 2 days.

Mild symptoms may occur in some people after being immunized, especially those receiving the vaccine for the first time. Symptoms can include fever, headache and aching muscles. They can start within 6 to 12 hours and end within 24 to 48 hours after the vaccine was given. These symptoms are less severe and last a shorter time compared to influenza infection.

Each year the content of the flu vaccine is changed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to protect against the strains that are expected to circulate across the world.

The 2018-2019 seasonal influenza vaccine (Fluviral) can protect against the equivalent strains of:

- *Influenza A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus*
- *Influenza A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016 (H3N2)-like virus*
- *Influenza B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus from B/Victoria lineage*



Who should not get the influenza vaccine?

Speak with a health care provider if you:

- Have had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of influenza vaccine, or any component of the vaccine.
- Have had severe oculo-respiratory syndrome (red eyes and a cough and/or sore throat and/or, hoarseness) after getting an influenza vaccine.
- Developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 8 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine without another cause being identified. GBS is a rare condition that can result in weakness and paralysis of the body's muscles.
- People with egg allergies can be safely immunized with the inactivated influenza vaccine.

If I still get influenza or flu, does that mean that the vaccine did not work?

There are many different types of viruses year-round that can cause flu-like symptoms, but these are not actually the influenza virus.

The influenza vaccines protect against the strains of influenza viruses that health experts think will likely cause influenza during the flu season. The vaccines do not protect against other viruses that cause similar illnesses, like respiratory syncytial virus, also known as RSV, or parainfluenza. Because the influenza virus strains change most years, you need to get immunized each year to be protected against new strains.

In elderly people and people who have certain chronic health conditions, the vaccines may not prevent influenza completely but may decrease symptoms, complications and the risk of death from influenza.

