

# Influenza (Flu) Vaccine



« Vaccination is good protection »

This vaccine protects against influenza (flu) and its complications. It does not protect against colds and respiratory infections caused by other viruses.

DISEASE	Influenza is spread by:	Influenza causes:	Possible complications:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact with secretions from the nose and throat of an infected person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever</li> <li>Cough</li> <li>Fatigue</li> <li>Headache</li> <li>Muscle pain</li> <li>General feeling of illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ear infection</li> <li>Sinusitis</li> <li>Bronchitis</li> <li>Pneumonia</li> <li>Death</li> </ul>

## VACCINE

Vaccination is the best protection against influenza and its complications. The vaccine may be given starting at 6 months old. It is recommended for people at higher risk of complications and individuals who may pass the disease on to them. It is also recommended for anyone who wants to reduce their risk of catching influenza. The vaccine must be administered each year, in the fall. Children under 9 years of age who have not previously been vaccinated against influenza receive 2 doses of the vaccine, 1 month apart.

The risk of complications from influenza is higher for children under 2 years, people aged 60 and over, anyone suffering from certain chronic illnesses like heart, lung or kidney disease, or diabetes, cancer or asthma, and individuals with a suppressed immune system.

The influenza vaccine is safe. Most reactions are harmless and do not last long. Symptoms experienced after vaccination are not necessarily caused by the vaccine. It cannot give you influenza (flu).

REACTIONS	Possible reactions to the vaccine:	What to do:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pain (50% or more), with or without redness or swelling (10-49%) at the injection site</li> <li>Muscle pain, headache or fatigue (10-49%)</li> <li>Fever, chills, joint pain or malaise (1-9%), particularly in individuals vaccinated against influenza for the 1<sup>st</sup> time</li> <li>Bloodshot eyes, sore throat, cough, difficulty breathing (1-9%) or facial swelling (1 to 9 per 1,000) This is called Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome (ORS).</li> <li>Nausea or dizziness (1 to 9 per 1,000)</li> <li>Rash or hives (1 to 9 in 10,000)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply a cold, damp compress to the injection site</li> <li>Take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for temperature of 38.5°C or higher</li> <li>See a doctor if symptoms are severe</li> </ul>
	<p>There may be a very slight risk of developing Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) after receiving the influenza vaccine. The risk is estimated at 1 additional case per million people vaccinated, compared with the expected GBS rate per million among the adult population, i.e. 10 to 20 cases per million. The syndrome causes progressive and reversible paralysis, which sometimes leaves permanent effects. The cause of GBS is unknown. Most cases occur following an intestinal or respiratory infection, especially in young adults and seniors.</p>	

As with any drug or biological product, an allergic reaction may occur. If a severe allergic reaction occurs, it begins within minutes and the person administering the vaccine will be able to treat it. That is why you are advised to remain at the clinic for at least 15 minutes after the vaccine is administered.

If you have any questions, ask the person administering the vaccine or contact Info-Santé (8-1-1) or your doctor.