

Preventing Seasonal Flu: Getting Vaccinated For Parents



Two Types of Flu Vaccine that both have the same influenza strains in them:

- **The “flu shot”** – an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is injected with a needle into the muscle. The seasonal flu shot is approved for use in people 6 months of age and older, including healthy people and those with chronic medical conditions.
 - An **intradermal vaccine**, which is injected with a needle into the “dermis” or skin, is now available for people 18 to 64 years of age.
- **The nasal-spray flu vaccine** – a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for “Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine”). It is administered as a nasal spray. LAIV is approved for use in healthy* people 2 to 49 years of age and healthy women in that age range who are not pregnant.

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three influenza viruses that research suggests will be most common.

Who should get a seasonal flu vaccination each year?

- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine each year, especially:
 - People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
 - People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from the flu, including:
 - Health care workers
 - Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
 - Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 5 years of age, and especially contacts of children younger than 6 months of age

Who is at high risk for developing flu-related complications?

- Children younger than 5 years of age, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women seem to be at higher risk for flu complications
- People who have certain chronic medical conditions, such as:
 - Congestive heart failure
 - Asthma
 - Diabetes

Who should *not* be vaccinated against seasonal flu?

- People who have a **severe** allergy to chicken eggs.
 - Mild reaction to eggs (including hives) is not a vaccination contraindication.
- Persons who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past.
- Children younger than 6 months of age (influenza vaccine is not approved for use in this age group).
- People who have a moderate or severe illness with OR WITHOUT a fever should wait to get vaccinated until their symptoms lessen.
- People with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome (a severe paralytic illness, also called GBS) that occurred after receiving influenza vaccine and who are not at risk for severe illness from influenza should generally not receive vaccine. Tell your clinician if you ever had Guillain-Barré syndrome. Your clinician will help you decide whether the vaccine is recommended for you.

*“Healthy” = persons who do not have an underlying medical condition that predisposes them to influenza complications.

Reference

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Key Facts About Seasonal Influenza (Flu)*. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>. Accessed March 6, 2012.