

Is it safe for pregnant women to get flu vaccine?

Yes. As the vaccine only contains killed virus it is safe to use during pregnancy. No serious adverse events for mothers or babies have been attributed to the vaccine. Pregnant women should discuss vaccination with their occupational health unit or general practitioner.

When should vaccination be postponed?

There are very few reasons why vaccination should be postponed. Vaccination should be re-scheduled if you have an acute illness with a temperature greater than 38°C.

Is there anyone who cannot get flu vaccine?

Most people can get flu vaccine.

It is not recommended for those who have:

- a history of anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of flu vaccine or any part of the vaccine,
- a known anaphylactic reaction to egg products,
- developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of a previous flu vaccination. For people with a history of sporadic GBS, consider deferral of flu vaccination for one year following onset of GBS.

Why do I need to get vaccinated against the flu every year?

Flu viruses change from year to year, which means that you can get flu more than once during your lifetime. This is why flu vaccine is different each year and you should get flu vaccine each year.

Can the vaccine cause flu?

No. The viruses in the vaccine are killed and cannot cause flu.

What can I expect following vaccination?

You may get soreness or redness around the injection site. You may experience a mild generalised reaction of fever, fatigue and headache for up to 48 hours after receiving the vaccine. These non-specific side effects do not mean that you are getting flu.

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccine

In addition to the seasonal flu vaccine you will also need to be vaccinated against pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza. The seasonal flu vaccine will not protect you against swine flu.

For more information

Contact your line manager or

visit www.immunisation.ie or www.hpsc.ie

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Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Information for healthcare workers



Get the vaccine - not the flu

If you are a healthcare worker, whether in a hospital or in the community, the last thing you want is to bring the flu home. The best way to protect yourself, your family and those in your care is to get the seasonal flu vaccine.

Seasonal Influenza vaccine information for healthcare workers

What is flu (influenza)?

Flu is a highly infectious viral illness of the respiratory tract that can be life threatening. Most people with flu are sick for 5-7 days with high temperature, sore throat, muscle pains, fatigue and headache. Some people have a more serious illness and may be admitted to hospital.

What are the complications of flu?

Complications of flu include bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections and rarely acute encephalopathy (swelling of the brain) and Guillain-Barré syndrome (a nerve condition that can result in temporary paralysis). Severe disease and death is most likely in people with chronic medical conditions and the elderly. Worldwide, flu causes 3 – 5 million cases of severe disease each year and 250,000 to 500,000 deaths.

Is it the flu or a cold?

Flu symptoms start suddenly with fever, muscle aches, headache and fatigue. A cold usually comes on gradually with a sore throat and a blocked or runny nose and is generally mild compared to the flu.



How is flu spread?

Flu is spread by coughing and sneezing. Anyone with flu can be infectious from 1 day before to 3 – 5 days after onset of symptoms. This means that you can pass on flu to somebody you care for even before you know that you are sick.

Why do I need the vaccine?

Flu vaccine is recommended for healthcare workers to protect you from getting flu and to reduce transmission of flu to you, your family and your patients. You are caring for elderly and at risk patients who may not get sufficient protection from the vaccine themselves.

How safe is flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines have been used for more than 60 years worldwide and are very safe. The most common side effects are generally mild. Life-threatening allergic reactions are extremely rare, but can happen in people who have a severe allergy to any vaccine component, most commonly to the egg protein left in the vaccine after growing the virus.

In 1976, a swine flu vaccine was associated with Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). Since then, flu vaccines have not been clearly linked with GBS.

Who should be vaccinated?

Flu vaccine is recommended for all frontline healthcare workers including:

- Medical, nursing and paramedical staff,
- Medical and nursing students,
- Dental personnel,
- Hospital porters and cleaners,
- Ambulance personnel.

The vaccine is also recommended for other groups because they are at an increased risk of developing complications from the flu.