

Keep your kids safe. Get their seasonal flu shots every fall or winter.

Seasonal Flu Guide for Parents

Is seasonal flu more serious for kids?	Infants and young children are at a greater risk for getting seriously ill from the flu. That's why the New York State Department of Health recommends that all children 6 months and older get the seasonal flu vaccine.
Flu vaccine may save your child's life.	Most people with seasonal flu are sick for about a week, and then they feel better. But, some people, especially young children, pregnant women, older people, and people with chronic health problems can get very sick. Some can even die. A flu vaccine is the best way to protect your child from seasonal flu.
What is seasonal flu?	The flu, or influenza, is a viral infection of the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu can spread from person to person.
Flu shot or nasal-spray vaccine?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flu shots can be given to children 6 months and older.• A nasal-spray vaccine can be given to healthy children 2 years and older.• Children younger than 5 years who have experienced wheezing in the past year – or any child with chronic health problems – should get the flu shot, not the nasal-spray vaccine.• Children younger than 9 years old who get a vaccine for the first time need two doses.
How else can I protect my child?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the seasonal flu vaccine for yourself.• Encourage your child's close contacts to get seasonal flu vaccine, too. This is very important if your child is younger than 5 or if he or she has a chronic health problem such as asthma (breathing disease) or diabetes (high blood sugar levels).• Wash your hands often and cover your coughs and sneezes. This will prevent the spread of germs.• Tell your children to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay away from people who are sick;• Clean their hands often;• Keep their hands away from their face, and• Cover coughs and sneezes to protect others. It's best to use a tissue and quickly throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
What are signs of the flu?	The flu comes on suddenly. Most people with the flu feel very tired and have a high fever, headache, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and sore muscles. Some people, especially children, may also have stomach problems and diarrhea. The cough can last two or more weeks.



How does the flu spread?	People who have the flu usually cough, sneeze, and have a runny nose. The droplets in a cough, sneeze or runny nose contain the flu virus. Other people can get the flu by breathing in these droplets or by getting them in their nose or mouth.
How long can a sick person spread the flu to others?	Most healthy adults may be able to spread the flu from one day before getting sick to up to 5 days after getting sick. This can be longer in children and in people who don't fight disease as well (people with weaker immune systems).
What should I use to clean hands?	Wash your children's hands with soap and water. Wash them for as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. If soap and water are not handy, use wipes or gels with alcohol in them unless they are visibly soiled. The gels should be rubbed into hands until the hands are dry.
What can I do if my child gets sick?	Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks lots of fluids. Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child over-the-counter medicine. If your children or teenagers may have the flu, never give them aspirin or medicine that has aspirin in it. It could cause serious problems.
Can my child go to school/day care with the flu?	No. If your child has the flu, he or she should stay home to rest. This helps avoid giving the flu to other children.
When can my child go back to school/day care after having the flu?	Children with the flu should be isolated in the home, away from other people. They should also stay home until they are symptom-free for 24 hours (that is, until they have no fever without the use of fever-control medicines and they feel well for 24 hours.) Remind your child to protect others by covering his or her mouth when coughing or sneezing. You may want to send your child to school with some tissues, wipes or gels with alcohol in them if the school allows gels.

For more information about the flu, visit
<http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/>

Or, www.cdc.gov/flu
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



State of New York
Department of Health

Important News for Schools and Child Care Facilities

What: An amendment to public health law (PHL) section § 613 directs the New York State Department of Health's (NYSDOH) Commissioner of Health to provide families of children between 6 months and 18 years of age who attend certain child care settings, public schools and non public schools with educational materials on influenza and the benefits of influenza immunizations.

To view amended PHL § 613 in its entirety, visit the "Recommended Vaccinations" web page below, scroll down to "Looking for Information on Vaccine Laws?" and follow directions for "Influenza Education Public Health Law Amendment."

http://www.nyhealth.gov/prevention/immunization/recommended_vaccinations.htm

Purpose: To ensure that families of these children receive information on influenza disease and the benefits of influenza immunizations in connection with efforts to raise the immunity of children against influenza.

How does this amended PHL affect my school or child care facility?

Schools and child care settings are now required to post influenza educational material, in plain view, within their facilities.

Outreach to parents and guardians of children ages 6 months to 18 years is directed to those whose children attend:

- Licensed and registered day care programs
- Nursery schools
- Pre-kindergarten
- Kindergarten
- School age child care programs
- Public schools
- Non-public schools

The NYSDOH would like you to know that information regarding influenza and the benefits of influenza immunizations is free and accessible on our website:

http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/childhood_adolescent/

In this email, and on our website, you will find our *Seasonal Flu Guide for Parents*. This document speaks to parents and guardians and addresses why seasonal influenza is serious, signs of influenza and how to protect your child from influenza by getting vaccinated. Your facility is welcome to download and post this document along with any other information you find useful beginning early August.

If you have questions about this amended PHL, please contact the NYSDOH Bureau of Immunization at immunize@health.state.ny.us or 518/473-4437.

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Safety & Prevention

Inactivated Influenza Vaccine: What You Need to Know

Why get vaccinated?

Influenza (“flu”) is a contagious disease.

It is caused by the influenza virus, which can be spread by coughing, sneezing, or nasal secretions.

Anyone can get influenza, but rates of infection are highest among children. For most people, symptoms last only a few days. They include:

- fever
- sore throat
- chills
- fatigue
- cough
- headache
- muscle aches



Other illnesses can have the same symptoms and are often mistaken for influenza.

Infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions – such as heart, lung or kidney disease or a weakened immune system – can get much sicker. Flu can cause high fever and pneumonia, and make existing medical conditions worse. It can cause diarrhea and seizures in children. Each year thousands of people die from seasonal influenza and even more require hospitalization.

By getting vaccinated you can protect yourself from influenza and may also avoid spreading influenza to others.

Inactivated influenza vaccine

There are two types of influenza vaccine:

1. **Inactivated** (killed) vaccine, or the “flu shot” is given by injection into the muscle.
2. **Live, attenuated** (weakened) influenza vaccine is sprayed into the nostrils. *This vaccine is described in a separate article, [here](#).*

A “high-dose” inactivated influenza vaccine is available for people 65 years of age and older. Ask your healthcare provider for more information.

Influenza viruses are always changing, so annual vaccination is recommended. Each year scientists try to match the viruses in the vaccine to those most likely to cause flu that year.

The 2010-2011 vaccine provides protection against A/H1N1 (pandemic) influenza and two other influenza viruses – influenza A/H3N2 and influenza B. It will not prevent illness caused by other viruses.

It takes up to 2 weeks for protection to develop after the shot. Protection lasts about a year. Some inactivated influenza vaccine contains a preservative called thimerosal. Thimerosal-free influenza vaccine is available. Ask your healthcare provider for more information.

Who should get inactivated influenza vaccine and when?

WHO

All people **6 months of age and older** should get flu vaccine.

Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe influenza and their close contacts, including healthcare personnel and close contacts of children younger than 6 months.

People who got the 2009 H1N1 (pandemic) influenza vaccine, or had pandemic flu in 2009, should still get the 2010-2011 seasonal influenza vaccine.

WHEN

Getting the vaccine as soon as it is available will provide protection if the flu season comes early. You can get the vaccine as long as illness is occurring in your community.

Influenza can occur at any time, but most influenza occurs from November through May. In recent seasons, most infections have occurred in January and February. Getting vaccinated in December, or even later, will still be beneficial in most years.

Adults and older children need one dose of influenza vaccine each year. But some children younger than 9 years of age need two doses to be protected. Ask your healthcare provider.

Influenza vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines, including pneumococcal vaccine.

Some people should not get inactivated influenza vaccine or should wait

- Tell your healthcare provider if you have any **severe** (life-threatening) allergies. Allergic reactions to influenza vaccine are rare.
 - Influenza vaccine virus is grown in eggs. People with a **severe egg allergy** should not get influenza vaccine.
 - A severe allergy to any vaccine component is also a reason not to get the vaccine.
 - If you ever had a severe reaction after a dose of influenza vaccine, tell your healthcare provider.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a severe paralytic illness, also called GBS). Your provider will help you decide whether the vaccine is recommended for you.
- People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting flu vaccine. If you are ill, talk to your healthcare provider about whether to reschedule the vaccination. People with a mild illness can usually get the vaccine.

What are the risks from inactivated influenza vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of a vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

Serious problems from inactivated influenza vaccine are very rare. The viruses in inactivated influenza vaccine have been killed, so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine.

Mild problems:

- soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- hoarseness; sore, red or itchy eyes; cough
- fever
- aches

If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days.

Severe problems:

- Life-threatening allergic reactions from vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it is usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot.
- In 1976, a type of inactivated influenza (swine flu) vaccine was associated with Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS). Since then, flu vaccines have not been clearly linked to GBS. However, if there is a risk of GBS from current flu vaccines, it would be no more than 1 or 2 cases per million people vaccinated. This is much lower than the risk of severe influenza, which can be prevented by vaccination. One brand of inactivated flu vaccine, called Afluria, should not be given to children 8 years of age or younger, except in special circumstances. A related vaccine was associated with fevers and fever-related seizures in young children in Australia. Ask your healthcare provider for more information.

The safety of vaccines is always being monitored. For more information, visit:

www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccine_Monitoring/Index.html
and www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Activities/Activities_Index.html

What if there is a severe reaction?

What should I look for?

Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

What should I do?

- **Call** a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- **Tell** the doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- **Ask** your healthcare provider to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form. Or you can file this report through the VAERS website at www.vaers.hhs.gov, or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

VAERS does not provide medical advice.

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) was created in 1986.

People who believe they may have been injured by a vaccine can learn about the program and about filing a claim by calling 1-800-338-2382, or visiting the VICP website at www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation.

How can I learn more?

- Ask your healthcare provider. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO) or
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/flu

Vaccine Information Statement (Interim) Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (8/10/10) 42 U.S.C. §300aa-26

Last Updated 5/31/2011

Source U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
Vaccine Information Statement

[topic landing page](#)