

VACCINE INFORMATION AND AFTER CARE

Important Information about Influenza and Influenza Vaccine

Please read this carefully and ensure a health care provider answers your questions before getting the vaccine.

What is Influenza?

Influenza is also called the flu. It is a viral infection of the bronchial tubes and lungs that usually occurs in Canada from about November to April. Influenza causes fever, chills, cough, sore throat and aching muscles.

Influenza can cause severe illness in some populations. This includes adults 65 years of age and older, babies and children up to 5 years old, pregnant people, anyone with chronic conditions like heart disease, asthma, and diabetes, people at high risk of COVID-19 related illness, and people who live or care for those at high risk of influenza-related complications or hospitalization.

Who Should Receive the Influenza Vaccine?

Immunization against influenza is publicly funded, free of charge, and advised for all Nova Scotians.

- **Babies and children aged 6 months to 5 years**

Because of their age, babies' and children's immune systems are still building immunity to fight off serious infections.

- **Pregnant people**

During pregnancy, the body goes through many changes that can make it harder for the body to fight off infections. People who get the influenza vaccine during pregnancy pass on immunity to their baby. Babies younger than 6 months cannot get vaccinated against influenza. Getting your influenza vaccine can help protect your baby from influenza after birth.

- **Adults 65 years of age and older**

The immune system changes with age and this can make it harder for the body to fight off infections. People over 65 are also more likely to have health conditions that can get worse if they get influenza.

- **Anyone with chronic conditions like heart disease, asthma and diabetes**

These conditions can affect a person's immune system and make it harder to fight off infections.

- **People at high risk of COVID-19 related illness**

People at high risk for COVID-19-related illness should get an influenza vaccine this year. Getting an influenza vaccine reduces the risk of severe illness that could happen when someone catches both COVID-19 and influenza.

- **People who live or care for those at high risk of influenza-related complications or hospitalization**

When health care workers and other care providers are vaccinated, their risk of illness decreases. The risk of death and other serious outcomes among the people in their care also decreases.

Influenza Vaccine Information

- Children 6 months to 8 years (inclusive) require 2 doses of vaccine if they have never had the vaccine before.
- Influenza vaccine is available in the fall. Although vaccination before the onset of the influenza season is strongly preferred, influenza vaccine may still be administered up until the end of the season. People need to be vaccinated against influenza each year because the virus changes.
- Being vaccinated against influenza is the most effective way to prevent influenza illness and influenza-related complications and the vaccine will provide protection after about two weeks.

If you are 5 and older it is safe to get a flu vaccine before, after, or at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine. As a precaution, children ages 6 months to 4 years (or those aged 5 who receive a Moderna COVID-19 vaccine) need to wait 14 days between their influenza vaccine and receiving their COVID-19 vaccine.

Who Should NOT Receive Influenza Vaccine?

- People who presently have a high fever (over 39.5 °C / 103°F).
- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of influenza vaccine.
- Infants under 6 months of age because they are too young to receive an influenza vaccine.

What to Expect Following Immunization with Influenza Vaccine

People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.

- Most people have no side effects from influenza vaccination.
- The most common side effect is a sore arm that can last for a day or two.
- Other side effects — like a slight fever, chills, or a headache — are uncommon.

Pain or fever medication (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may relieve the pain or fever. Check with your healthcare provider if you need advice about medication.

High-dose Flu Vaccine

Long-term care residents and patients in hospital awaiting placement in a long-term care facility who are 65 and older will all get the high-dose influenza vaccine for free.

Other Nova Scotians 65 and older can choose to pay for the high-dose influenza vaccine at a pharmacy. Or they can get the regular influenza vaccine for free.



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For information visit: <https://novascotia.ca/flu/>