



## FACT SHEET

### Influenza Vaccination: A Summary for Clinicians

**Influenza vaccination is the most effective method for preventing influenza virus infection and its potentially severe complications.**

- There are two types of influenza vaccine: **Trivalent Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (TIV)** and **Live, Intranasal Influenza Vaccine (LAIV)**.
  - TIV is injected into the muscle of the shoulder or thigh. It is approved for use in people 6 months of age or older, including healthy people, those with chronic medical conditions and pregnant women.
  - LAIV is given as a nasal spray. It is approved for use in healthy\* people 2- 49 years of age who are not pregnant.
- Influenza vaccine reduces the likelihood of becoming ill with influenza or transmitting influenza to others.

#### **When should vaccination occur?**

Providers should begin vaccinating their patients as soon as they have influenza vaccine and should continue to offer vaccine to their patients in December and later. Flu season can begin as early as October, but disease most often peaks in January or February in most years, and can occur as late as May.

#### **Who Should Get Vaccinated?**

In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting influenza can get vaccinated. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of serious influenza complications or people who live with or care for people at higher risk for serious complications. While infants younger than 6 months are a high risk group, they cannot be vaccinated, so vaccinating people around them (like family members, caregivers and any other close contacts) is recommended.

Persons working in health care settings also should be vaccinated annually against influenza. Vaccination of health care professionals has been associated with reduced work absenteeism and with fewer deaths among nursing home patients.

**People recommended for vaccination based on their risk of complications from influenza or because they are in close contact with someone at higher risk of influenza complications include:**

- Children aged 6 months until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday
- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease)
- People who live in nursing homes and other long term care facilities
- Household contacts of person at high risk for complications from influenza
- Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age
- Health care workers

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### **People who should NOT be vaccinated include:**

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past
- People who developed Guillain-Barre syndrome within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine previously
- Influenza vaccine is not approved for children less than 6 months of age.
- People who have a moderate to severe illness with a fever should wait to get vaccinated until they recover.

### **Trivalent Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (TIV) Dosing and Side Effects**

- TIV is approved for use in people 6 months and older, including those with high risk conditions.
- Two doses administered at least one month apart are recommended for children aged 6 months–8 years who are receiving an influenza vaccine for the first time. Those who only received 1 dose of influenza vaccine in their first year of vaccination should receive 2 doses the following year.
- The viruses in the injectable influenza vaccine are inactivated so they do not cause influenza.
- Minor side effects that can occur include soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site, fever (low grade) or aches. If these problems occur, they begin soon after vaccination and usually last 1 or 2 days.

### **Live, Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) Dosing and Side Effects**

- LAIV is approved for use in healthy\* people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.
- Two doses administered at least four weeks apart are recommended for children aged 2–8 years who are receiving an influenza vaccine for the first time. Those who received only 1 dose of influenza vaccine in their first year of vaccination should receive 2 doses the following year.
- LAIV is made from weakened virus and does not cause influenza. The vaccine can cause mild illness in some people who get it.
- In children, LAIV side effects can include runny nose or mild wheezing. Occasionally headache, vomiting, muscle aches or fever have been reported.
- In adults, LAIV side effects can include runny nose, headache, sore throat or cough.

\* "Healthy" indicates persons who do not have an underlying medical condition that predisposes them to influenza complications.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu), or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).

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