

2025-2026 Influenza Vaccine

What is influenza

- Influenza is caused by a virus that spreads easily by coughing, sneezing and direct contact with nose and throat secretions.
- It can result in hospitalization and death, especially in very young children, the elderly and those who have underlying health conditions.
- Symptoms include sudden onset of fever, cough, chills, muscle aches, headache, and a runny nose.
- Infected people can spread the virus to others before they show any symptoms.

How can I prevent getting or spreading influenza?

- **Get immunized every year** to protect yourself and those around you.
- Stay home when you feel sick.
- Clean your hands regularly.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands if soap and water are unavailable.
- Cover your mouth when coughing and your nose and mouth when sneezing to prevent direct contact with droplets from the nose or throat.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces regularly.

Who can get this vaccine for free?

- Everyone 6 months of age and older.
- Individuals 65 years of age and older are recommended to receive an enhanced influenza vaccine.

It is highly recommended for:

- Residents in long-term care facilities and personal care homes.
- Persons with a chronic health condition including but not limited to:
 - lung and/or heart diseases
 - asthma
 - diabetes mellitus
 - neurological conditions
 - cancer
 - kidney disease
 - severe obesity
 - children on long term aspirin therapy
- Pregnant individuals in all trimesters.
- Indigenous persons
- Individuals who are at increased risk for occupational exposure to avian influenza A viruses.
- Children from 6 months up to and including 59 months of age (under 5 years old). **NOTE:** Children younger than 9 years of age need 2 doses 4 weeks apart if they **have not** had a dose of influenza vaccine in the past.

Groups recommended to get immunized to protect those at high-risk include:

- Health care workers, volunteers and visitors to health care facilities.
- Household and close contacts of persons who are at risk of getting seriously ill with influenza.
- Household and close contacts of babies younger than 6 months of age.
- Members of households expecting babies.
- Individuals providing regular childcare to children younger than 5 years old, either in or out of the home.

Who should not get the vaccine?

- Persons who have a serious acute illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunizations until they feel better.
- People who had a serious or life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any influenza vaccine, or any components in the vaccine (excluding egg).
- Babies younger than 6 months old.
- People who developed a neurological disorder called Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of a previous influenza immunization.

How soon will my child/I be protected after getting the vaccine?

- Protection (antibodies) develops within 2 weeks after immunization in most healthy individuals.
- Effectiveness varies depending on the age, the immune response of the person immunized, and the match between the vaccine viral strains and the influenza viral strains circulating in the community.

Use **Acetaminophen** (all ages; Tylenol®, Tempra®) or **Ibuprofen** (6 months and older; Advil®, Motrin®) to treat fevers and pain in children and adults. **Never give ASA** (Aspirin®) to anyone younger than 18 years old because of the serious risk of Reye's syndrome.

What are possible reactions to the vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get influenza illness.**
- Expected and temporary reactions occurring 2 to 3 days after vaccination include:
 - Soreness, warmth, redness and swelling at the injection site and/or limited movement of the immunized arm or leg.
 - Headache, muscle aches, fever, chills, fatigue, joint pain, irritability, sweating, loss of appetite and swollen lymph glands around the jaw and neck.
- Most reactions resolve within 3 days.
- Only treat a child's fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) if they are uncomfortable, refusing fluids and not sleeping.

Less common reactions:

- Oculorespiratory syndrome (ORS). Tell your public health nurse, physician, or nurse practitioner if you have experienced sore red itchy eyes and respiratory problems (difficulty breathing, cough, wheeze, chest tightness, sore throat) with or without facial swelling following a previous influenza vaccine.
- The background rate of GBS from any cause (**including influenza disease**) is 1-2 cases per 100,000 persons/ year (which means about 10-20 cases per million people/year). Investigations have shown either no risk or a very small attributable risk of GBS in roughly 1 case per million doses/year from influenza vaccine.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.** This reaction can be treated and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine.

Who should you report reactions to?

- If you have any concerns about the symptoms you develop after receiving the vaccine, call 811. If you received your vaccination from a pharmacist, please consult them first when possible.
- For more information, speak with the vaccine provider or contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, pharmacist or by calling 811.

What do injectable influenza vaccines contain?

NOTE: These vaccines cannot cause influenza because they do not contain any live influenza viruses.

Influenza vaccines for the 2025-26 season contain antigens to protect against the following strains:
A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus,
A/Croatia/10136RV/2023 (H3N2)-like virus, B/
Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus.

Vaccines for those 6 months of age and older:

FLUVIRAL® contains this year's recommended influenza strains, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, disodium hydrogen phosphate heptahydrate, potassium dihydrogen phosphate, water for injection, α -tocopheryl hydrogen succinate, polysorbate 80 and may contain residual amounts of egg protein (ovalbumin), sodium deoxycholate, ethanol, formaldehyde and sucrose from the manufacturing process. Latex and antibiotic free. Thimerosal is added as a preservative to multidose vials.

FLUZONE® contains this year's recommended influenza strains, sodium chloride, sodium phosphate (dibasic anhydrous), sodium phosphate (monobasic anhydrous), water for injection, and traces of egg protein, formaldehyde, sucrose and Triton® X-100. Latex and antibiotic free. Thimerosal is added as a preservative to multidose vials. Pre-filled syringes do not contain thimerosal.

Mature Minor Consent: It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who can understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

Reference: [Canadian Immunization Guide](#)
2025 product monographs.

Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at saskatchewan.ca/immunize.

