2026-2027 Influenza Vaccine

What is influenza

- Influenza (flu) is caused by a virus that spreads easily when an infected person coughs or sneezes or has close contact with others.
- Influenza can make people very sick. It can lead to a hospital stay or even death, especially for young children, older adults, and people with certain health conditions.
- Common symptoms include sudden onset of fever, cough, chills, muscle aches, headache, and a runny nose.
- People infected with influenza can spread the virus to others before they feel sick or show symptoms.

How can I prevent getting or spreading influenza?

- **Get immunized every year** to protect yourself and others.
- Stay home when you feel sick.
- Clean your hands regularly (use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available).
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Who can get this vaccine for free?

- Everyone 6 months of age and older.
- Adults 65 years of age and older are recommended to receive an enhanced influenza vaccine for better protection.

Influenza vaccine is especially recommended for:

- People living in long-term care facilities and personal care homes.
- People with long-term health conditions, such as:
  - Lung or heart diseases
  - Asthma
  - Diabetes mellitus
  - Neurological conditions
  - Cancer
  - Kidney disease
  - Severe obesity
  - Children on long term aspirin therapy
- People who are pregnant, at any stage of pregnancy.
- Indigenous peoples.
- People whose work may put them increased risk for exposure to avian (bird) influenza A viruses.
- Children 6 months to 4 years of age.

Note: Children younger than 9 years of age need **2 doses**, given **4 weeks** apart, if they have never received **an** influenza vaccine before.

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

- Health care workers, volunteers, and visitors to health care facilities.
- Family members and close contacts of people who are at higher risk of serious illness from influenza.
- Family members and close contacts of babies younger than 6 months old.
- People who live with someone who is pregnant.
- Anyone who regularly cares for children younger than 5 years old, either at home or elsewhere.

Who should not get the vaccine?

- People who are seriously ill, with or without a fever, should delay vaccination until they feel better.
- People who have had a serious or anaphylactic reaction to an influenza vaccine in the past, or to any of its ingredients (except eggs).
- 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 or I be protected after getting the vaccine?

- Most people are protected about **2 weeks after getting the vaccine.** This is how long it takes the body to build protection against influenza.
- How well the vaccine works can vary. It depends on a person's age, how their immune system responds to the vaccine, and how closely the vaccine matches the influenza viruses spreading 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 that may occur up to 3 days after vaccination include:
  - Soreness, warmth, redness, or swelling at the injection site and/or limited movement of the immunized arm or leg.
  - Headache, muscle aches, fever, chills, tiredness, 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, not drinking, or 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 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 at 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. This reaction is extremely rare (less than 1 in 1 million people) and can be treated. **If these symptoms happen after you leave the clinic, get medical help right away or call 911.**

For more information, contact your local public health office, doctor, nurse practitioner, pharmacist, or HealthLine 811.

Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any unexpected or serious reactions to your local public health nurse, doctor, nurse practitioner, or HealthLine 811 as soon as possible.
- If you received your vaccination from a pharmacist, please consult them first when possible.

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 2026-27 season contain these strains:

- A/Missouri/11/2025 (H1N1)pdm09-like strain (A/Switzerland/6849/2025, IVR-278)
- A/Darwin/1454/2025 (H3N2)-like strain (A/Michigan/105/2025, SAN-049A)
- B/Tokyo/EIS13-175/2025-like strain (B/Tokyo/EIS13-175/2025, wild type)

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, product monographs.

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