



INFORMATION SHEET

Trivalent Influenza Vaccine (TIV)

What is the Influenza Vaccine?

The Influenza vaccine is an effective way to keep you from getting very sick from influenza. The Influenza vaccine is typically made with a small amount of dead virus that will not cause disease but can help the immune system learn how to protect itself against the influenza virus if it enters the body. This vaccine can be given to anyone 6 months of age or older.

There are many flu viruses but most commonly, Flu A and B are the two strain types that infect people every respiratory season. The trivalent influenza vaccine protects against the most common two strains of influenza A and against the most common strain of influenza B for that season.

The seasonal influenza vaccine is needed every year because protection from the vaccine decreases over time and the strains of the virus that circulate can change from year to year. Before every influenza season, international experts provide advice on the specific strains of influenza viruses that should be included in the vaccine for the upcoming season.

What is influenza or flu?

Influenza or flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness and sometimes can lead to death especially in the very young and the very old. Symptoms of influenza include fever, chills, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, cough, headache and a runny nose. Some may also experience nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, especially young children. Flu can strike suddenly and symptoms can last for up to 7-10 days.

One complication of the flu is pneumonia (a lung infection) that may lead to hospitalization or even death. Flu is more dangerous for some people including infants, seniors, those who are pregnant, and people with chronic health conditions such as heart, lung, liver or kidney disease, severe obesity or diabetes.

Influenza infection has also been linked to increased risk of cardiovascular events, including myocardial infarction (heart attack), heart failure, and stroke, particularly in people with pre-existing cardiac conditions. Studies show that influenza vaccination may offer additional protection against cardiovascular events in high-risk groups, such as people who already have cardiovascular disease.

Immunization is the best way to protect yourself from getting influenza.

In the NWT, it is recommended that anyone 6 months of age and older receive the influenza vaccine every year.

If you are unsure if you or your child should receive Influenza vaccine, book an appointment with your local health care provider to discuss vaccination eligibility.

How is influenza spread?

People spread influenza to others through direct contact with respiratory secretions, like saliva or mucus through:

- Coughing,
- Sneezing,
- Face to face contact,
- Kissing, or
- Sharing toys, food, drinks, cigarettes, lipstick, water bottles and instruments.

You can also become infected when you touch a surface contaminated with the virus such as doorknobs, phones, or someone's hands and then touching your face, eyes or nose.

Who should get the Influenza vaccine?

Anyone 6 months of age and over is recommended to receive an influenza vaccine each year in the fall. Children who are between the age of 6 months and under 9 years of age that are receiving the vaccine for the first time will need 2 doses, spaced one month apart.

Even if you already had the flu this season, it is worth scheduling a vaccine with your health care provider during the same flu season to protect against other circulating flu strains.

What are possible side effects to the Influenza vaccine?

Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. See blue box regarding monitoring for rare severe allergic reactions.

Side effects, if they occur, are usually mild and go away within a few days. You can give medication for pain/fever if needed.

Check with your health care provider if you have concerns or need advice about which medications to give. Mild side effects include: swelling, redness, and soreness where you got the vaccine.

Other side effects can include:

- Fever,
- Drowsiness,
- Headache,
- Muscle or joint ache,
- Rash,
- Irritability, and
- Loss of appetite or an upset stomach.

Who should NOT get the Influenza vaccine?

- Persons with a history of anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) after previous receipt of the vaccine
- Persons with proven immediate or anaphylactic hypersensitivity to any component of the specific vaccine or its container, except egg.
- Please contact your health care provider for more information.

To find out more about the Influenza vaccine, contact your local health unit or visit the following links:

- **NWT Immunization Schedule:** www.gov.nt.ca/nwtimmunizationschedule
- **Immunize Canada** <https://immunize.ca>
- To track of your family's immunizations and to receive vaccine schedule reminders download the [CANImmunize App](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is a rare possibility of a severe allergic reaction. This usually happens soon after vaccination and may include: hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips.

If this happens after you leave the clinic, call or go to the nearest emergency department or health centre for immediate treatment.

Please report any serious or unexpected side-effects to your healthcare provider