

LIVE, INTRANASAL INFLUENZA VACCINE
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
2004-2005

Why get vaccinated?

Influenza (“flu”) is a serious disease.

It is caused by a virus that spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. Influenza causes:

- Fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches

Anyone can get influenza. Most people are ill with influenza for only a few days, but some get much sicker and may need to be hospitalized. Influenza causes an average of 36,000 deaths each year in the U.S., mostly among the elderly. **Influenza vaccine can prevent influenza.**

Live, intranasal influenza vaccine:

- Two types of influenza vaccine are now available—an inactivated vaccine and a live vaccine.
- Live, intranasal influenza vaccine (trade-name FluMist™) was licensed in 2003. FluMist contains live, attenuated (weakened) influenza virus. It is sprayed into the nostrils rather than injected into the muscle.
- Inactivated influenza vaccine, sometimes called the “flu shot,” has been used for many years, and is given by injection. It contains killed influenza virus.
- Ingredients: The Food and Drug Administration’s Vaccines and Related Biological Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) recommended that the 2004-05 trivalent vaccine for the United States contain: A/New Caledonia/20/99 (H1N1), A/Wyoming/03/2003 (H3N2) – (an A/Fujian/411/2002-like strain) and B/Jiangsu/10/2003- (a B/Shanghai/361/2002-like strain).

Who can get live, intranasal influenza vaccine?

- Live, intranasal influenza vaccine is approved for healthy children and adults from 5 through 49 years of age, including household contacts of most people at high risk for influenza complications. However, FluMist should not be used by people with some medical conditions, pregnant women, or others at risk of influenza-related complications (see Section 4).

Who should *not* get live, intranasal influenza vaccine?

The following people should not get intranasal influenza vaccine. They should check with their health care provider about getting **inactivated influenza vaccine, or the flu shot.**

- Adults 50 years of age or older or children younger than 5
- People who have a chronic medical condition (i.e . diabetes, heart disease)
- People with a **weakened immune system** due to:
 - Long-term treatment with drugs that weaken the immune system, such as steroids/ immuran/ remicaid; transplant, leukemia, rheumatoid arthritis
 - Cancer treatment with x-rays or drugs
- Pregnant women
- Nursing mothers whose child has not received a flu vaccine
- Anyone who has had a fever in the past 48 hours
- Anyone who has had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) in the past six months
- Anyone with HIV infection and a CD4 count less than 100
- Anyone who has a household member who is severely immunocompromised (e.g. acute leukemia or recent bone marrow transplant)

The flu shot (inactivated vaccine) is preferred over live, intranasal influenza vaccine for physicians, nurses, family members, or anyone else coming **in close contact with anyone with a severely weakened immune system** (that is, requiring care in a protected environment).

You should talk with a doctor before getting *either* flu vaccine if you have ever had a serious allergic reaction to eggs or to a previous dose of influenza vaccine.

If you have a fever or are severely ill at the time the vaccination is scheduled, you should probably wait until you recover before getting influenza vaccine. You should not receive either vaccine if you have received a live vaccine within the last 30 days.

When should I get influenza vaccine?

The best time to get flu vaccine is in **October** or **November**. The flu season can peak anywhere from December through March, but most often peaks in February. Receiving the vaccine in December, or even later, can be beneficial in most years.

What are the risks from live, intranasal influenza vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. However, the risk of a vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small. Chances of live influenza vaccine viruses spreading from person to person are very small. Even if such spread should occur, it is unlikely to cause illness.

Live, intranasal influenza vaccine can cause mild symptoms in the recipient:

- **Mild problems:**

- Some children and adolescents 5-17 years of age have reported mild reactions, including: runny nose, nasal congestion, cough, fever, headache, muscle aches, abdominal pain, or occasional vomiting or diarrhea
- Some adults 18-49 years of age have reported mild reactions, including: runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, chills, tiredness, weakness, headache

These symptoms did not last long and went away on their own. Even when they occur after vaccination, they may not have been caused by the vaccine.

- **Severe problems:**

Life-threatening allergic reactions from vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it would be within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination. If rare reactions occur with any new product, they may not be identified until many thousands, or millions, of people have used the product. Like all vaccines, live, intranasal influenza vaccine is being monitored for unusual or severe problems.

What if there is a moderate or severe reaction? What should you look for?

You should look for any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heartbeat or dizziness.

What should I do if I have a reaction to the vaccine?

Seek medical attention immediately if severe reaction occurs! Report any reactions to Occupational Health Services at 410-955-6211. They may refer you to your primary care physician. Have all your vaccination information available. Ask OHS to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form. Or you can file this report through the VAERS web site at www.vaers.org, or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

How can I learn more?

Ask your immunization provider. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information. Call your local or state health department. Contact the CDC or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-232-2522 (English) or 1-800-232-0233 (Español). You may also visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/flu