



Kids Need Flu Vaccine, Too!

Pediatric Influenza Prevention Program

Frequently Asked Questions About Pediatric Influenza Immunization

What is influenza? Is it serious?

- Influenza and pneumonia combined is a leading cause of death in children.ⁱ
- Many parents don't know influenza is a serious disease. Influenza, also known as the "flu," can cause severe health problems and lead to hospitalization.ⁱⁱ
- Influenza is primarily a respiratory infectious disease that causes symptoms of fever, headache, body ache, and cough. Although it is sometimes called the "flu," influenza is different and often more serious than vomiting and diarrhea.
- In fact, children aged 6-23 months have as high a chance of being sent to the hospital with influenza as people 65 years old and up.ⁱⁱⁱ

What can I do to help protect my child from getting influenza?

- Making sure your [SON or DAUGHTER] gets an influenza vaccination every year is the best way to protect [HIM or HER] from getting influenza.^{iv}

How do I know if my child should get an influenza vaccine?

- The nation's top health officials recommend that certain groups of children get vaccinated against influenza every year beginning in October because they have an increased chance of coming down with problems related to influenza compared to other groups of children. Health officials call these groups "high-risk."
- Your [SON or DAUGHTER] should receive an influenza vaccine if [HE or SHE] is:
 - A child aged 6-23 months of age
 - A child with a serious medical condition, like asthma, diabetes and heart disease or is taking immunosuppressive drugs, steroids or aspirin therapy^v

Goals of this NFID program are supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Influenza Summit. The National Influenza Summit, co-sponsored by the American Medical Association and CDC, is comprised of organizations representing physicians, public health, nurses, pharmacists, managed care and community providers.

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Made possible by an unrestricted educational grant to the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases by Aventis Pasteur

What other groups should be vaccinated to protect children from influenza?

- Any person who is in close contact with children under 2 years of age or with children who have serious medical problems should get vaccinated against influenza each year to prevent spreading the infection to these children. This includes parents, grandparents, older brothers and sisters, and any caregiver.^{vi}

When is the best time to have my child vaccinated?

- The best time to have your [SON or DAUGHTER] vaccinated is at the start of October and continuing through December.^{vii}
- However, if you cannot come in until December or later, the influenza vaccine can still help protect your [SON or DAUGHTER] from the virus in most years.^{viii}
- If your [SON or DAUGHTER] is 6 months to 9 years of age and has never gotten an influenza vaccine before, [HE or SHE] will need two doses one month apart to make sure [HE or SHE] is protected. The best time to get that first vaccination is in September, if the vaccine is available that early.^{ix}

But I've heard that the influenza vaccine can give you influenza? Is the influenza vaccine safe?

- The injected influenza vaccine cannot give your [SON or DAUGHTER] influenza.^x
- The influenza vaccine is made from killed or “dead,” viruses. This means your [SON or DAUGHTER] cannot get influenza from the vaccine.^{xi}
- The injected influenza vaccine is very safe. The most common symptoms associated with vaccine administration are soreness and redness at the injection site and low fever.

My child was vaccinated last year. Is another vaccine this year really necessary?

- New influenza vaccines are made before every influenza season because the virus strains can change each year and protection from influenza vaccine does not last more than one year. This means that last year's influenza vaccine will not protect your [SON or DAUGHTER] against this year's influenza viruses.^{xii}

ⁱ National Vital Statistics Report, Deaths: Leading Causes for 2000, Vol. 50, No. 16, September 16, 2002: 13.

^{ii-xii} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Prevention and Control of Influenza: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).” MMWR 2004;53(Early Release): 1-30.