

Influenza

Injectable Flu Vaccine

What is Influenza?

Influenza is a serious respiratory infection caused by the influenza virus. It is also called "The Flu."

Colds, stomach upset, and other viral infections are often mistaken for the flu; however, they are caused by different viruses.

The flu lasts 2-7 days, sometimes longer in the elderly and those with health problems. Cough and fatigue symptoms can linger for weeks.

More than 10,000 Canadians are sent to hospital with the flu every year. In Canada annually, there are about 3,500 flu-related deaths (NACI, 2021).

How do I get the Flu?

The flu spreads easily through coughing, sneezing, or touching infected surfaces or objects like unwashed hands, toys and eating utensils.

Preventing the Flu

The flu shot is the best defence against the flu virus, in addition to using current Public Health Measures. The vaccine can prevent influenza illness in up to 60% of healthy children and adults (CDC, 2020).

TABLE: Difference between a Common Cold, COVID-19 and Influenza

Symptom	Common Cold	COVID-19	Influenza (The Flu)
Fever	Rare	Common	Common
Headache	Rare	Sometimes	Common
Muscle aches and pains	Common	Sometimes	Common
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
Runny or stuffy nose	Common	Rare	Sometimes
Sneezing	Common	No	No
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Cough	Mild	Common; usually dry	Common; usually dry
Shortness of Breath	No	Sometimes	No
Loss of taste/smell	No	Common	No
Diarrhea	No	Rare	Sometimes for children

Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Accessed from Alberta Health Services (2021)



Lambton
Public Health

Prevent the spread of the virus



Wash hands thoroughly and often



Keep alcohol-based hand sanitizer handy



Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve



Keep surfaces and items disinfected



Get the seasonal flu vaccine

Who SHOULD get the flu shot?

Everyone 6 months of age and older can benefit from the flu shot.

Those at high risk of developing flu complications:

- Anyone with chronic health conditions
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- People 65 years of age or older
- Children 6 months to less than 5 years of age
- Healthy, pregnant women (especially in third trimester)
- Severely obese persons (BMI \geq 40)
- Indigenous Peoples
- Anyone who can spread flu to those at high risk
- Health care and other care providers
- Household contacts of:
 - individuals at high risk
 - infants under 6 months of age
 - expected newborn during flu season
- Those caring for children under 5 years old
- Those providing service in closed settings to persons at high risk
- Essential community service workers

Who should **NOT** get the flu shot?

- Children under 6 months of age
- Anyone who had a serious reaction to a previous dose of any influenza vaccine
- People with a severe allergy to any component of the vaccine (except eggs)
- Anyone who developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of a past flu shot
- Anyone with moderate to severe acute illness with fever should wait until symptoms pass

Will it give me the flu?

No. The flu shot does **not** contain live virus, so you cannot get the flu from the vaccine.

Common Side Effects:

- Soreness, redness or swelling at the spot where you got the shot
- Low-grade fever, muscle aches or headache

Serious reactions are rare and usually happen within minutes to a few hours after receiving the vaccine. Seek medical attention (call 911 or visit the emergency department) if you experience any of the following:

- Hives or an itchy rash
- Swelling of the mouth or throat
- Trouble breathing, hoarseness or wheezing
- Pale skin colour, weakness, fast heartbeat or dizziness

If you have an unusual reaction, call your health-care provider and report it to Lambton Public Health at 519-383-8331 or toll free 1-800-667-1839.

If sick, stay home and isolate:

Complete COVID-19 Screening and follow the recommendations provided. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/screen-covid-19-going-any-public-place>

Questions? Call Lambton Public Health at 226-254-8222, toll free 1-800-667-1839 or visit www.lambtonpublichealth.ca.

Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Health