

Influenza Disease

What is influenza disease?

- Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus.
- The virus infects the nose, throat, and lungs.
- It can cause mild to severe illness, hospitalization, and even death.

What are the symptoms?

- Anyone can get flu and it strikes suddenly and can last several days.
- Symptoms of flu disease may include:
 - Fever or feeling feverish/chills
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Runny or stuffy nose
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headaches
 - Fatigue (very tired)
 - Vomiting and diarrhea

How does influenza disease spread?

- Flu is spread by:
 - An infected person's droplets from cough, sneeze or talk enter the mouth, eye or nose.
 - Touching a surface or object with flu virus on it and then touching mouth, eyes or nose.
- An infected person can infect others 1 day before symptoms start and up to 5 to 7 days after symptoms start.
- Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

How do I prevent the flu?

- Get a yearly flu vaccine.
- Wash your hands properly and often.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with arm.
- Clean and sterilize surfaces.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Where can I find more information?

- Ask your doctor.
- Call the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at 1-800-469-4599.
- Go to cdc.gov and type influenza in the SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health

Immunization Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104

1-800-469-4599 www.adph.org/imm 2/29/16

Influenza Vaccine

Who should get the influenza (flu) vaccine?

- The flu vaccine is recommended every year for everyone age 6 months or older.

Who should be vaccinated against influenza because they are at increased risk?

- Children 6 months of age through 5 years
- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Pregnant women
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who have medical conditions including the following:
 - Asthma
 - Chronic lung disease
 - Heart disease
 - Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)
 - Kidney disorders
 - Liver disorders
 - Weakened immune systems due to disease or medication (such as HIV/AIDS or cancer)
 - People younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
 - People with extreme obesity

What are the common vaccine side effects and risks?

- Flu vaccines are safe, but some side effects can occur.
- Minor problems following the flu vaccine include soreness, redness, and/or swelling from the shot, hoarseness, sore, red or itchy eyes, cough, fever, aches, headache, itching, and fatigue.
- More serious problems may include Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) in fewer than 1 or 2 cases per one million people vaccinated, children receiving multiple vaccines slightly increase in fever with seizure.
- People who should not get the flu vaccine include anyone with severe, life threatening allergies, had GBS before, or not feeling well the day of vaccination.

Where can I find more information?

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- Ask your school nurse.
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