

Injectable Flu Vaccine

Vaccination,
the best protection

September 2024

Vaccination is the best protection against the flu and its complications.
This vaccine does not protect against colds and respiratory infections caused by other viruses.

Disease	Signs and symptoms	Possible complications
Flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Coughing• Fatigue• Headache• Muscle soreness• Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea (mostly in children)• General feeling of illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ear infection• Sinusitis• Bronchitis• Pneumonia• Death

The vaccine

Vaccination is the best protection against the flu and its complications. The vaccine may be given starting at 6 months old. It is recommended for people at higher risk of flu-related hospitalization especially those with chronic illnesses. Flu vaccination is also recommended for people who may pass the disease to them, that is members of their household and their caregivers.

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The vaccine must be given each year, in the fall. Children under 9 years of age who have not previously been vaccinated against the flu receive 2 doses of the vaccine, 1 month apart.

Symptoms after vaccination

Some symptoms may be caused by the vaccine (e.g. redness at the injection site). Other problems may occur by chance and are not related to the vaccine (e.g. cold, gastro, headache).

Injectable flu vaccine is safe. Most reactions are harmless and do not last long.

Frequency	Possible reactions to the vaccine	What to do
In most cases (more than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain at the injection site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply a cold, damp compress at the injection site.• Use a medication for fever or discomfort if needed.• See a health professional if symptoms are severe.
Very often (less than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain and swelling at the injection site• Muscle soreness, joint pain, headache, fatigue• Loss of appetite, drowsiness (sleepiness), irritability	
Often (less than 10% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruising or itching at the injection site• Fever, shivering and discomfort, particularly in persons vaccinated for the 1st time against flu• Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain• Red eyes, sore throat, coughing, difficulty breathing; this is referred to as <i>Ocular Respiratory Syndrome</i> (ORS)	
Sometimes (less than 1% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facial swelling; this reaction is part of ORS• Skin rash• Dizziness• Swollen glands	
Rarely (less than 1 person in 1,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convulsions• Numbness, neuralgia (pain along the path of a nerve)	

There is also a very small risk of developing Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) after receiving the flu vaccine. The risk is probably about 1 extra case in one million people vaccinated, compared to an expected frequency for GBS of 10 to 20 cases in one million in the adult population. This syndrome causes progressive, reversible paralysis, which can sometimes leave permanent effects. The cause of GBS is unknown. Most cases occur after an intestinal or respiratory infection, including flu, especially in young adults and the elderly.

We recommend that you stay at the clinic for at least 15 minutes after vaccination because allergic reactions may occur. If an allergic reaction occurs, the symptoms will appear a few minutes after the vaccination. The person giving the vaccine will be able to treat this reaction immediately.

For any questions, contact the person giving the vaccine, or Info-Santé 811 or a health professional.