

# Avian Flu A(H5N1) Vaccine

Vaccination,  
the best protection

July 2025

Vaccination is the best protection against the avian flu A(H5N1) and its complications. This vaccine does not protect against colds and respiratory infections caused by other viruses.

Disease	Signs and symptoms	Possible complications
Avian Flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conjunctivitis</li><li>• Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea</li><li>• Fever</li><li>• Coughing</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Headache</li><li>• Muscle soreness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lung damage (breathing difficulty, pneumonia, respiratory distress syndrome)</li><li>• Neurological damage (mental status change, convulsions)</li><li>• Systemic failure (heart failure, kidney and liver dysfunction)</li><li>• Death</li></ul>

## The vaccine

Vaccination is the best protection against the avian flu A(H5N1) and its complications. This vaccine is indicated for workers with a high probability of frequent and intense exposure to wild or domestic birds that may be infected with avian influenza A(H5N1).

## 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).

Injectable avian flu A(H5N1) vaccine is safe. Most reactions are harmless and do not last long.

Frequency	Known reactions to these vaccines	What to do
In most cases (more than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pain at the injection site</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply a cold, damp compress at the injection site.</li><li>• Use medication for fever or discomfort if needed.</li><li>• See a health professional if symptoms are severe.</li></ul>
Very often (less than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Muscle soreness, joint pain</li><li>• Fatigue</li></ul>	
Often (less than 10% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Redness or swelling at the injection site</li><li>• Headache</li><li>• Chills, fever, sweating</li></ul>	

There is also a very small risk of developing Guillain Barré syndrome (GBS) after receiving the avian flu A(H5N1) vaccine. The risk is probably about 2 extra cases 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, especially in young adults and the elderly.

We recommend that you stay at the clinic at least 15 minutes after vaccination because allergic reaction may occur. If an allergic reactions occurs, the symptoms will appear a few minutes after 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.**