

# Influenza (Flu) Vaccine (Inactivated or Recombinant): *What you need to know*

Many Vaccine Information Statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See [www.immunize.org/vis](http://www.immunize.org/vis)

Hojas de información sobre vacunas están disponibles en español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite [www.immunize.org/vis](http://www.immunize.org/vis)

## 1 Why get vaccinated?

Influenza (“flu”) is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year, usually between October and May.

Flu is caused by influenza viruses, and is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing, and close contact.

Anyone can get flu. Flu strikes suddenly and can last several days. Symptoms vary by age, but can include:

- fever/chills
- sore throat
- muscle aches
- fatigue
- cough
- headache
- runny or stuffy nose

Flu can also lead to pneumonia and blood infections, and cause diarrhea and seizures in children. If you have a medical condition, such as heart or lung disease, flu can make it worse.

Flu is more dangerous for some people. Infants and young children, people 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions or a weakened immune system are at greatest risk.

Each year **thousands of people in the United States die from flu**, and many more are hospitalized.

### Flu vaccine can:

- keep you from getting flu,
- make flu less severe if you do get it, and
- keep you from spreading flu to your family and other people.

## 2 Inactivated and recombinant flu vaccines

A dose of flu vaccine is recommended every flu season. Children 6 months through 8 years of age may need two doses during the same flu season. Everyone else needs only one dose each flu season.

Some inactivated flu vaccines contain a very small amount of a mercury-based preservative called thimerosal. Studies have not shown thimerosal in vaccines to be harmful, but flu vaccines that do not contain thimerosal are available.

There is no live flu virus in flu shots. **They cannot cause the flu.**

There are many flu viruses, and they are always changing. Each year a new flu vaccine is made to protect against three or four viruses that are likely to cause disease in the upcoming flu season. But even when the vaccine doesn’t exactly match these viruses, it may still provide some protection.

Flu vaccine cannot prevent:

- flu that is caused by a virus not covered by the vaccine, or
- illnesses that look like flu but are not.

It takes about 2 weeks for protection to develop after vaccination, and protection lasts through the flu season.

## 3 Some people should not get this vaccine

Tell the person who is giving you the vaccine:

- **If you have any severe, life-threatening allergies.**

If you ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction after a dose of flu vaccine, or have a severe allergy to any part of this vaccine, you may be advised not to get vaccinated. Most, but not all, types of flu vaccine contain a small amount of egg protein.

- **If you ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (also called GBS).**

Some people with a history of GBS should not get this vaccine. This should be discussed with your doctor.

- **If you are not feeling well.**

It is usually okay to get flu vaccine when you have a mild illness, but you might be asked to come back when you feel better.



## EMPLOYEE INFLUENZA DECLINATION FORM

1. I have read the CDC Influenza Vaccine Information Statement. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, which were answered to my satisfaction. I understand the benefits and risks of influenza vaccine.

I intend to be vaccinated at \_\_\_\_\_ a clinic, \_\_\_\_\_ other employer, \_\_\_\_\_ MD, \_\_\_\_\_ or Pharmacy

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/201\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Initial) I have already had an influenza vaccination this year. (Sept. 1 – March 1).

### DECLINATION

3. I acknowledge that I am aware of the following facts:

- Influenza is a serious respiratory disease that kills, on average, 36,000 Americans every year.
- Influenza virus may be shed for up to 48 hours before symptoms begin, allowing transmission to others.
- Up to 30% of people with influenza have no symptoms, allowing transmission to others.
- Influenza virus changes often, making annual vaccination necessary. Immunity following vaccination is strongest for 2 to 6 months.
- I understand that influenza vaccine cannot transmit influenza. It does not, however, prevent all disease.
- I have declined to receive the influenza vaccine for the 2017/2018 season. I acknowledge that influenza vaccination is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for all health care employees to prevent infection from and transmission of influenza and its complications, including death, to patients/residents/clients/my coworkers, my family and my community.

4. I decline the offer of vaccination for the following reasons (please initial all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ My philosophical or religious beliefs prohibit vaccination.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a medical contraindication to receiving the vaccine.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other reason \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not wish to say why I decline.

5. **Knowing the facts set forth above, I choose to decline vaccination at this time.** I may change my mind and accept vaccination later, if vaccine is available. I have read and fully understand the information on this declination form.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/201\_\_