



# 2020/2021 Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Vaccines

## What is it?

- Seasonal influenza vaccine protects against seasonal influenza (flu), a serious respiratory illness caused by a virus. For more information, see [Facts About... Influenza \(Flu\)](#).
- This year there are two different types of publicly funded (free) flu vaccines available:
  - High-dose trivalent vaccine (High-dose TIV) protects against 3 types of flu (two strains of influenza A and one type of influenza B) and has 4 times the antigen of a regular flu shot which may produce a stronger immune response
  - Quadrivalent vaccine (QIV) protects against 4 types of flu (two strains of influenza A and two strains of influenza B)

## How effective is the seasonal flu vaccine?

- It can take two weeks after getting the flu vaccine for your body to build protection against the flu
- You are more likely to be protected from the flu if you get your flu vaccine. People who get the flu vaccine may still get the flu, but they may be less sick and have fewer complications

## Who should receive the flu vaccine?

- Everyone 6 months and older should receive the flu vaccine every year
- People ages 6 months and older may receive QIV
- People 65 years of age and older may receive High-dose TIV or QIV

## The flu vaccine is very important for:

### People at higher risk of having complications from the getting the flu:

- Adults and children with chronic health conditions
- Pregnant women
- Indigenous peoples
- All children 6 months to 4 years of age and people age 65 and older
- People of any age who are residents of long-term care homes and other chronic care facilities

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## People capable of transmitting flu to those at high risk:

- Health care providers and those who provide services to those at high risk
- Household contacts of people at high risk
- Those providing child care to children under 5 years of age

## Other recommended groups:

- People who provide essential community services
- People in direct contact with avian-flu infected poultry

## Who should not get the vaccine?

- Babies under 6 months of age
- People with serious acute illness should wait until they feel better before getting the flu vaccine
- People who have had an anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of flu vaccine
- Individuals who have developed Guillain-Barré syndrome within 6 weeks of a flu vaccine
- Anyone who is allergic to a component of the vaccine, with the exception of egg

## What is the schedule for the vaccine?

- Anyone 6 months and older can receive the influenza vaccine every year
- Children 6 months to less than 9 years of age, who have never had the flu vaccine, require 2 doses given at least 4 weeks apart
- The flu vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines

## Are there side effects with the vaccine?

- Flu vaccine is safe and well tolerated. Side effects are usually mild and last a short time and include redness, pain and swelling where the needle was given.
- Severe allergic reactions after vaccination are very rare and may not be related to the vaccine.
- The risk of the vaccine causing serious harm is extremely small. The risk of serious illness and death related to getting the flu is much higher.
- If you think a serious reaction is developing, seek medical attention right away. Any unusual or significant changes in your health or your child's health after the immunization should be reported to a health care provider and the Health Department.

For more information on where to get your flu vaccine, visit [durham.ca/flu](https://durham.ca/flu)

September 17, 2020

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](https://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

