

## INFLUENZA VACCINATION RECOMMENDATIONS 2011-12

### WHO SHOULD BE VACCINATED?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with the support of leading health experts, recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older receive flu vaccine.

Vaccination is important for all people; however, vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe influenza and their close contacts, including healthcare personnel.

Groups at higher risk of severe influenza include:

- Children younger than 5 years of age, especially children younger than 2 years,
- Pregnant women,
- Adults 50 years of age and older,
- People of any age who have:
  - Asthma
  - Cancer
  - Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)
  - Chronic lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and cystic fibrosis)
  - Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus)
  - Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure, and coronary artery disease)
  - Kidney disorders
  - Liver disorders
  - Neurological and neuro-developmental conditions (including disorders of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve, and muscle such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy (seizure disorders), stroke, intellectual disability (mental retardation), moderate to severe developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, or spinal cord injuries)
  - Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
  - Neuromuscular disorders (such as muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis)
  - Weakened immune systems due to disease or medication (such as people with HIV or AIDS, cancer, or those on chronic steroids)
- Children younger than 18 years of age and younger who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- People who are morbidly obese,
- Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and
- People who live in long-term care facilities and nursing homes.

Those who come into close contact with high-risk groups should get vaccinated, not only to help protect themselves against influenza, but also to help avoid spreading the disease to more vulnerable people. Close contacts include:

- Household contacts and caregivers of anyone in a high-risk group, including parents, siblings, grandparents, babysitters, and child care providers, and
- Health-care personnel.

Note: Children 8 years of age and younger receiving an influenza vaccination for the first time need 2 doses approximately 1 month apart.

### WHO SHOULD NOT BE VACCINATED?

Children younger than 6 months of age should not receive flu vaccine. The vaccine is not licensed yet for this age group. Some people should not be vaccinated or should talk with their health-care provider first. These people include:

- People with a severe (life-threatening) allergy to eggs,
- People who have had a severe allergic reaction to a past influenza vaccination, and
- People who have ever had Guillain Barré Syndrome.

Your doctor can help you decide whether the vaccine is recommended for you.

### WHEN SHOULD YOU BE VACCINATED?

You should be vaccinated as soon as vaccine is available in the late summer or early fall.

- If you don't have a chance to get vaccinated early in the season, vaccination is still beneficial.
- This is because in most seasons, influenza activity doesn't peak until January or February.
- In fact, as long as influenza viruses are still circulating, it's a good idea to get vaccinated.

It only takes about 2 weeks for the vaccine to protect against the virus.