



Seasonal influenza vaccine

(Flu vaccine)

What is the seasonal influenza vaccine?

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against influenza (flu) viruses. Each year, scientists determine which flu strains are likely to cause illness and those strains are then added to the vaccine for the season. Many approved influenza vaccines are available in Canada annually.

What are the benefits of the seasonal influenza vaccine?

Getting your flu vaccine every year is important because the viruses can change from year to year, and the protection provided by the previous vaccine decreases over time. Getting immunized each year is the best way to protect against influenza infection, a serious and sometimes fatal disease. When you and your family are immunized, you help protect others as well.

How is seasonal influenza vaccine given?

The seasonal influenza vaccine is given as an injection in the upper arm in adults and to young children in their thigh or in their upper arm.

Who should receive the seasonal influenza vaccine?

The seasonal influenza vaccine is available free of charge to all New Brunswick residents aged 6 months and over.

Who should not receive the seasonal influenza vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given if you or your child:

- had a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine in the past; or
- are allergic to any of the ingredients of the vaccine or its container.

What are the possible reactions after receiving the seasonal influenza vaccine?

Reactions are generally mild and last one to two days. The most common reactions include soreness, redness and/or swelling where the vaccine was given. Some children may have a fever, or experience crankiness, drowsiness, or a loss of appetite.

With any vaccine there is an extremely rare possibility (less than one in a million people) of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. For this reason, it is important to remain in the clinic for 15 minutes after you or your child receives the vaccine. Signs of this reaction may include rash, difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated.

VACCINE FACT SHEET

What can be done if you or your child has a reaction to the seasonal influenza vaccine?

- A cold compress at the injection site may reduce discomfort.
- For discomfort and fever, you can take or give your child medicine by following the manufacturer's instructions. Ask your healthcare provider what medicine is best.
- Aspirin (ASA) should **NOT** be given to children younger than 18 years due to its link to Reye's syndrome.

Any unexpected or serious reaction to a vaccine should be reported to your health-care provider.

Where can I get the vaccine?

Children can receive their vaccine through their [local public health office](#) (six months to 59 months), their primary care provider or their [local pharmacy](#) (two years and older).

Adults can receive their vaccine through their primary care provider or their [local pharmacy](#).

Long-term care residents from a nursing home or an adult residential facility can receive their vaccine on site.

Midwives provide vaccination to pregnant individuals.

Out-of-province students can also get their flu shots through student health services at their respective post-secondary institutions.

New residents and non-residents without a Medicare card can get flu shots free of charge from a pharmacist.

Some workplaces, including the Government of New Brunswick provide influenza immunization clinics for staff. Please verify with your employer to see if a vaccine clinic will be made available on location at your work site.

Further information

Inform your immunization provider if you or your child has any health problems or allergies.

Your immunization provider will give you a record of your or your child's immunizations. Keep this record in a safe place and bring it with you when the next immunization is due.

If you or your child has any unusual reactions to the vaccine, or you have any questions or concerns, please contact your primary care provider, pharmacist or [public health office](#).

VACCINE FACT SHEET

Useful websites:

- Government of New-Brunswick [Vaccines and immunization \(gnb.ca\)](https://www.gnb.ca)
- Public Health Agency of Canada: [Vaccines for children: About vaccines - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccines/about-vaccines.html)
- Caring for kids: [Immunization | Caring for kids \(cps.ca\)](https://www.cps.ca/immunization)
- Public Health Agency of Canada: [Vaccination for adults - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccines/adult-vaccination.html)

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