

What is the flu?

The flu is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by the flu virus. It spreads very easily from infected persons through coughing and sneezing or by touching contaminated surfaces such as door knobs and unwashed hands. People who get the flu may have a fever, chills, cough, runny eyes, stuffy nose, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, extreme weakness and fatigue. Symptoms can last five to ten days.

Who should get the flu vaccine?

Flu vaccine is recommended for everyone age 6 months and older, and is the most effective way to prevent the flu, and flu-related complications. Flu vaccine is especially important for:

- people with chronic medical conditions (heart, lung, diabetes, cancer, obesity, renal disease etc.)
- pregnant women (all trimesters)
- people who are residents of nursing homes and chronic care facilities
- health care workers and emergency service workers
- children under five years of age and their caregivers
- individuals age 65 years and older
- Indigenous peoples

When should the flu vaccine be given?

A single dose of flu vaccine should be given *each year*. Children under nine years require two doses given four weeks apart if they are receiving the vaccine for the first time; after that, only one dose each year is needed.

Who should NOT receive the flu vaccine?

Flu vaccine should not be given to:

- Infants under six months of age .
- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction

(anaphylactic) to a previous dose of vaccine or to any of the vaccine components.

- People who have had severe oculo-respiratory syndrome (ORS) after a past flu vaccine that required them to be in the hospital.
- People with a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) that developed within 6 weeks of a past influenza vaccine.

After the vaccine:

Side effects of the flu vaccine include redness, swelling, and soreness at the injections site. Headache, tiredness/weakness and fever may also occur. Seek medical attention if you have a concern about a vaccine reaction.

Risk of Severe Allergic Reaction:

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 but may include Guillain-Barre' Syndrome or Oculo-respiratory Syndrome. The risk of serious illness and death related to contracting 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.

Questions?

- ✓ Visit website www.ontario.ca/flu
- ✓ Your health care provider
- ✓ Call Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit 1-866-888-4577.