

Serious reactions are possible but extremely rare.

- Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) can occur for 1 in a million doses and can happen within minutes to a few hours after vaccination.
- The risk of getting Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a rare nerve condition, is estimated at 1 or 2 cases per million vaccinations.

Overall, these risks are much lower than the risk of severe complications from influenza infection, which can be prevented through vaccination.

As with any medication, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing serious injury or death. However, health authorities in Singapore and around the world recommend vaccination because the benefits are greater than the possible risks.

What Should I Do if There Is a Serious Reaction to the Vaccine?

Please let the nurse or doctor know immediately, or call an ambulance to go to the nearest hospital immediately, if you experience any of the following:

- Hives
- Face or throat swelling
- Difficulty breathing
- Dizziness

Where Can I Learn More About Influenza Vaccine?

For more information on influenza and influenza vaccination, visit

Ministry of Health (MOH)



<https://bit.ly/2spHlxd>

Communicable Diseases Centre (CDC)



<https://bit.ly/2x0G0pc>

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Influenza Vaccine



What Is Influenza?

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a common infection that is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing, and close contact.

The symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches and lethargy.

In high-risk persons (e.g. children and elderly), influenza can cause more severe complications, resulting in hospital admissions and even death.

Why Should I Go for Influenza Vaccination?

Influenza infection is a risk even in tropical countries.

In Singapore, there are **two seasonal peaks** for influenza every year.

- November to January
- May to July

Annually, 17% of pneumonia and influenza-related hospitalisations and 600 deaths are estimated to be caused by influenza in Singapore.

Influenza vaccine reduces the risk of infection caused by influenza viruses. You should get vaccinated while you are well to protect yourself from influenza and its complications.

Who Should Receive the Influenza Vaccine?

People who are at high risk for developing influenza complications should go for the vaccination. High-risk people include:

- Older adults aged 65 years and above
- Pregnant women in any trimester
- Persons with medical conditions such as diabetes, heart, lung, liver and kidney disease
- Persons with conditions that lower the body's resistance to infection (e.g. leukemia, HIV, spleen removed, or organ transplant)
- Persons on medications or treatments that lower the body's resistance to infection (e.g. long term steroids, certain cancer drugs, radiation therapy)
- Persons who stay at long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes and community hospitals
- Extremely obese patients (BMI 40 and above)
- Those in frequent contact with children younger than 5 years of age and adults 50 years of age and older

When Should I Receive My Influenza Vaccine?

You should take your influenza vaccination every year as flu viruses are constantly changing, and your body's immunity to influenza viruses may decrease over time.

Health authorities may recommend vaccination earlier than 12 months because the vaccine has been updated to match changes in the influenza virus.

If it has been more than 12 months since your last flu vaccination, do remind your doctor that you need a flu vaccine every year.

Where Can I Get My Vaccination?

You can get your vaccination at all polyclinics and hospitals.

Medisave may be used in most settings.

What Can I Expect After the Vaccination?

You may experience the following symptoms 1 to 2 days after the vaccination:

- Soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site, slight headache, body aches or tiredness. This usually gets better on its own within 2 to 3 days.
- Fever (temperature >38 deg Celsius) is **uncommon** and usually gets better in 1 to 2 days.

Paracetamol (1 to 2 tablets every 6 hours as needed) may help to reduce any discomfort. Do not exceed 8 tablets (500mg per tablet) in a day.

What Are the Risks and Complications of the Vaccine?

Vaccines, like any medication, can have side effects. The side effects may vary from mild to severe adverse reactions and vary between individuals.

Mild side effects include:

- Pain or swelling at the injection site
- People taking blood thinners (e.g. warfarin) or with bleeding problems may develop a hematoma (small lump with blood) where the injection was given but this is **uncommon**.
- Some people may feel faint after the vaccination. Sit for 15 minutes to avoid fainting and any subsequent injuries.