

FluMist – Intranasal Spray Influenza Vaccine

What is the FluMist Influenza Vaccine?

FluMist is an influenza vaccine given as a nasal spray. It's a safe and effective vaccine that protects against viruses that cause influenza (flu). 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. The protection from FluMist is similar to receiving the influenza vaccine by injection, but is administered instead as a nasal spray.

What are the benefits of the FluMist 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 flu 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.

What does the FluMist Influenza vaccine protect against?

All of the different influenza vaccines including FluMist offered in New Brunswick provide protection against four different influenza viruses:

- two influenza A viruses (H1N1 and H3N2)
- two influenza B viruses.

How is the FluMist Influenza vaccine given?

FluMist is given as a nasal spray into each nostril.

One dose annually is recommended. Children ranging from two years to less than nine years old who have never received the influenza vaccine before require two doses of influenza vaccine, with a minimum interval of four weeks between doses.

Who should receive the FluMist Influenza vaccine?

The province is introducing an intranasal influenza vaccine (FluMist) as an alternative to the traditional needle-based influenza vaccine for individuals ranging in age from **two to 17 years old**. It is meant for children and youth who have a fear of needles.

Who should NOT receive the FluMist Influenza vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given if your child:

- had a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine previously; or
- is allergic to any of the ingredients of the vaccine or its container.

NOTE: If your child has a chronic condition or illness, you should speak to your doctor to find out if the nasal flu vaccine is appropriate.

What are the possible reactions after receiving the FluMist Influenza vaccine?

As with any vaccine, side effects can occur. They are usually mild and may include fever, headache and flu-like symptoms (sore throat, nasal congestion, weakness) starting six to 12 hours after getting the vaccine and lasting about one to two days.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility less than 1 in a million of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. Should this reaction occur, your health care provider is prepared to treat it.

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

What can be done for reactions to the vaccine?

- For discomfort and fever, you can 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.

What else do you need to know?

- FluMist is a live attenuated vaccine, it has the potential for transmission to immunocompromised individuals. Children who received the FluMist vaccine should attempt to avoid, whenever possible, individuals who are immunocompromised for at least 2 weeks following vaccination.
- In circumstances where contact with severely immunocompromised individuals is unavoidable, the potential risk of transmission of the influenza vaccine virus should be weighed against the risk of acquiring the influenza virus for the severely immunocompromised person.
- Your immunization provider will give you a record of your child's immunization. Keep this record in a safe place and bring it with you the next time your child is immunized.
- If your child has any unusual reactions to the vaccine, or you have any questions or concerns, please contact your health-care provider.
- Individuals 16 years and older can give their own consent. Children younger than 16 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

Further information

For more information contact your pharmacist, local [Public Health office](#) or Tele-Care 811 to find out if your child is eligible.

Useful websites:

- Government of New-Brunswick
[Influenza in New Brunswick \(gnb.ca\)](https://www.gnb.ca)
- Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion
[Home | immunizecanada](https://www.immunizecanada.ca)
- Public Health Agency of Canada
[Flu \(influenza\): Get your flu shot - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/flu-influenza/get-your-flu-shot-canada.html)