

## ABOUT US

The non-profit National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC) is an independent clearinghouse for information on diseases and vaccine science, policy, law and the ethical principle of informed consent. NVIC publishes information about vaccination and health to encourage educated decision-making. NVIC does not make vaccine use recommendations. NVIC supports the availability of all preventive health care options and the legal right for individuals to make informed, voluntary health choices for themselves and their children.

## OUR WORK

NVIC provides the following programs and services to the public:

- Public education about vaccines and diseases;
- Analysis and monitoring of vaccine research, regulation, policymaking, and legislation;
- Health choice advocacy to secure informed consent protections in vaccine policies and laws;
- Promotion of quality scientific research into vaccine safety questions and identification of high-risk factors for vaccine injury;
- Counseling, information and resource referral for the vaccine injured.

**Protect Vaccine Choices in Your State** Go to [NVICadvocacy.org](https://www.nvicadvocacy.org) and learn how you can take action to protect medical, religious, and conscientious belief vaccine exemptions in vaccine policies and laws.

Copyright 2022 - All Rights Reserved



# INFLUENZA

DISEASE & VACCINE INFORMATION

## Seasonal Influenza: Quick Facts

1. Seasonal influenza is a viral infection caused by type A and B influenza viruses. The influenza virus mutates rapidly, and there are many influenza virus strains, as well as other types of viruses and bacteria that cause respiratory and gastrointestinal “influenza-like illness” (ILI) infections in humans.
2. Over 70 percent of all respiratory infections that occur during the “flu season” are not caused by type A or type B influenza viruses and a lab test is required to confirm whether an individual has an influenza infection. The majority of lab specimens test negative for influenza virus infection during most flu seasons.
3. Influenza symptoms can last a week or more and include sudden onset of high fever, chills, sore throat, fatigue, body aches, cough, diarrhea and vomiting. Most people recover in a few days or weeks without serious complications.
4. Serious complications of influenza include dehydration and secondary bacterial infections such as otitis media (ear infection), bronchitis, and pneumonia, which can lead to injury or death if not promptly diagnosed and treated.
5. Those at higher risk for influenza complications include persons 65 years or older, very young children, pregnant women, and those with a weakened immune system or certain chronic diseases.

CDC officials acknowledge they do not know exactly how many Americans die from influenza, but currently estimate there are between 12,000 and 79,000 influenza-related deaths in the U.S. every year. However, those numbers are based on a mathematical model used by federal health officials to make influenza mortality estimates and may or may not reflect the true number of influenza deaths in a given year.

## Common sense ways to prevent illness are to:

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick. If you are sick, stay home.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, and eat healthy foods rich in vitamins C & D.
- Get adequate sleep, lower stress, and exercise regularly when you are well.
- Consider holistic options like chiropractic care, homeopathy, naturopathy, acupuncture and nutritional supplementation to heal and stay well.

## Seasonal Influenza Vaccine: Quick Facts

1. There are two types of influenza vaccines available in the U.S.: inactivated injectable vaccine and live attenuated nasal spray vaccine. Depending upon the vaccine manufacturer, different flu vaccines are licensed for use in different age groups ranging from six months to 65+ years of age.
2. Inactivated injectable and live nasal spray influenza vaccines contain four influenza virus strains and are grown in either chicken eggs, dog kidney cells, or armyworm cells. Influenza vaccines sold by different drug companies contain various ingredients, including preservatives and adjuvants that may cause adverse reactions.
3. Every year, federal public health officials try to predict up to four influenza strains that are most likely to circulate throughout the world for inclusion in the flu vaccine.
4. According to the CDC, influenza vaccine effectiveness ranges from 10 to 60 percent and averaged less than 50 percent between 2004/2005 and 2019/2020 seasons. In most years, the elderly have received little or no protection from flu shots. Federal health officials did not estimate influenza vaccine effectiveness for the 2020/2021 flu season, reportedly due to low circulation of influenza viruses. The CDC has estimated vaccine effectiveness for the 2021/2022 season to be about 14 percent.
5. Reported influenza vaccine reactions frequently include fever, fatigue, joint and muscle pain, and headache. Serious reactions reported after receipt of flu shots include anaphylactic shock, brain inflammation, convulsions, wheezing/asthma, narcolepsy, and paralysis - including Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS), Bell’s Palsy and death.
6. Influenza vaccine reaction risks are higher if given to someone who is sick, is allergic to an ingredient in the vaccine, has a history of GBS, or has had previous influenza vaccine reactions.
7. Influenza vaccine injury and death claims filed by adults are the leading claims submitted to the federal vaccine injury compensation program and the most frequently compensated.
8. A number of influenza vaccine studies are not well designed and fail to demonstrate that the vaccine is effective and safe for all healthy and sick children and adults, including pregnant women, or when given simultaneously with other vaccines.

These quick facts are not intended to be medical advice. Before vaccination consult one or more trusted health care professionals. Learn more about influenza vaccine at [NVIC.org](https://www.nvic.org), or by scanning the QR code.

