

THE FLU IS EVERYWHERE.

Why get the flu shot?

Influenza is a serious illness that can lead to pneumonia. The flu shot is safe and it's the **most effective** way to protect you and your family from the flu. Studies have found that the flu shot can prevent up to 90%* of influenza in healthy adults and children. An Ontario study** showed that every year, the flu shot eliminates the need for over 200,000 visits to doctors' offices and 30,000 visits to hospital emergency departments. It also prevents approximately 300 deaths.

What's in the flu shot?

The World Health Organization (WHO) determines the three most likely flu virus strains to be circulating in the upcoming flu season. The vaccine is then manufactured to protect against these strains. Because the flu shot contains particles of inactivated (dead) flu virus, you cannot get influenza from the flu shot.

How does it work?

The flu shot strengthens your immune system against the three strains of the flu virus. It does this by stimulating your immune system to build up antibodies against the virus, making it stronger so that it's ready to fight off the illness before it starts.

Why should I get it early in the season?

Getting your flu shot early in the season lets your immune system build up antibodies sooner, so it's ready when flu season starts. It can take up to 2 weeks for antibodies to build up after you get the shot. So make sure to get the flu shot early this year.

Who should get it?

The flu shot is recommended for everyone over six months of age. It's especially important for:

- People with weakened immune systems.
- Pregnant women.
- Anyone who takes care of people in these groups.
- Young children.
- The elderly.



What are the potential side effects?

The most common side effect from a flu shot is soreness at the injection site. It is usually temporary and rarely interferes with normal activities.

* National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), Statement on Seasonal Trivalent Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (TIV) 2010-2011

** Kwong JC, *et al.* 2008

THE FLU SHOT. MAKING YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM STRONGER.

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