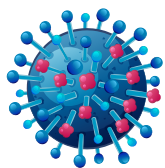


# THE FLU PREVENTION PLAYBOOK

## A Quick Guide for Families



**Flu** can be much more serious than a common cold. A yearly flu vaccine is recommended for every child aged 6 months and older unless there is a medical reason not to receive it.



### WHY EVERY CHILD NEEDS FLU PROTECTION

- Millions of children get the flu each year. Some become very sick and need hospital care.
- Children younger than 5 years and those with certain health problems have a greater risk, but even healthy children can become very sick.
- Flu can cause serious problems, like pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening asthma or heart disease.
- A flu vaccine can help prevent serious illness, hospital stays, missed school, and it can spread to others.



**TIMING:** Children should ideally be fully vaccinated by the end of October, but vaccination after October is still beneficial. If 2 doses are needed, children should get the first dose as soon as flu vaccines become available.

### DOES MY CHILD NEED A FLU VACCINE?

| Child's Age             | Current Recommendation                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Under 6 months old      | Too young for a flu vaccine. Vaccinating eligible caregivers and household members can help provide protection.             |
| 6 months to 8 years old | Needs a flu vaccine every year. Some children need 2 doses at least 4 weeks apart, depending on their vaccination history.* |
| 9 to 17 years old       | Needs a flu vaccine every year unless their clinician advises otherwise.                                                    |

\*Children 6 months to 8 years need 2 doses if they are receiving the flu vaccine for the first time, if they turned 9 before receiving their second lifetime dose, or if they have an unknown vaccination history.

When more than one option fits your child's age and health status, there is no preferred vaccine. Children with an egg allergy may receive any flu vaccine that is appropriate for their age and health status.

### WHICH VACCINE IS RIGHT FOR MY CHILD?

#### Recommended Influenza Vaccines for Pediatric Populations in the 2026-2027 Flu Season

| Vaccine                                  | Age Group  | Recommended Dose                              | Type               |
|------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Inactivated Trivalent Vaccines</b>    |            |                                               |                    |
| Fluarix                                  | ≥6 months  | 0.5 mL; prefilled syringe                     | Egg-based          |
| FluLaval                                 | ≥6 months  | 0.5 mL; prefilled syringe                     | Egg-based          |
| Fluzone                                  | ≥6 months  | 0.5 mL; prefilled syringe                     | Egg-based          |
| Flucelvax                                | ≥6 months  | 0.5 mL; prefilled syringe                     | Cell-culture-based |
| <b>Recombinant Trivalent Vaccine</b>     |            |                                               |                    |
| Flublok                                  | ≥9 years   | 0.5 mL; prefilled syringe                     | Recombinant        |
| <b>Live Attenuated Trivalent Vaccine</b> |            |                                               |                    |
| FluMist*                                 | 2–49 years | 0.2 mL (0.1 mL per nostril); intranasal spray | Egg-based          |

#### \*Before choosing the nasal spray, tell your clinician if your child:

- Has recently had an asthma attack or wheezing
- Has a weakened immune system
- Takes aspirin or salicylate-containing medication
- Recently took medicine to treat the flu
- Has had a severe reaction to a flu vaccine in the past

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER VACCINATION

- Side effects are usually mild and last only a few days.
- After the flu shot, your child may experience soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given, as well as headache, fever, nausea, or muscle aches.
- After the nasal spray, your child may experience a runny or stuffy nose or fever.
- Flu vaccines have a well-established safety record.
- The flu vaccine cannot give your child the flu.
- No flu vaccine is 100% effective, so if your child gets the flu, contact their healthcare professional to discuss treatment with an antiviral medication.



## MAKE A FLU PROTECTION PLAN

**My child should receive:**

☐ Flu shot   ☐ Nasal spray

**Number of doses needed this season:**

☐ 1   ☐ 2

**Dose given today:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Second dose due:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Resources:



Family Stories



Influenza Vaccine Recommendations  
for Children and Adolescents



The Flu: What Parents Need to Know

### References:

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