



Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme

Information for Healthcare Workers



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About this leaflet

This leaflet tells you about the seasonal influenza (flu) vaccine. It focuses on who should get the vaccine if you work in healthcare, when and how to get it, as well as other useful information.

Please read carefully.

By getting the seasonal flu vaccine, you protect yourself from infection with flu and you protect yourself from the complications of flu infection e.g. pneumonia or sepsis. You can also prevent the spread of flu to people around you, including family members and patients you care for.

What vaccines are available for healthcare workers for the flu vaccination programme?

The 2026-2027 HSE seasonal flu vaccination programme will offer the following flu vaccines for adults:

Standard Inactivated Influenza Vaccines (IIV)

- Vaxigrip – manufactured by Sanofi
- Influvac – manufactured by Viatriis

Adjuvanted (Enhanced) Inactivated Influenza Vaccines (aIIV)

- Fluad - manufactured by Seqirus is available for people aged 65 years and older

What is the flu?

The flu is a very infectious viral illness, that circulates in the community during the flu season. The flu season usually starts at the beginning of October and lasts until the end of April. Flu is a serious viral infection that can be life-threatening.

How does the flu spread?

Some people with flu may not have any symptoms but they can still spread infection to others.

Flu is spread through direct contact with a person who has flu infection or contaminated droplets either from coughing or sneezing.

The flu virus can survive on hard surfaces for up to 24 hours. Flu can also spread by touching a surface or object that has virus on it and then touching your mouth and nose. The spread of the flu virus can occur quickly in crowded areas e.g, in hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Anyone with flu can be infectious from 1–2 days before his or her symptoms begin until 4–5 days after symptoms start.

This means that you can pass on flu to a vulnerable person even before you know that you are sick.

Who can get the flu?

Anyone can get the flu. In most people that are generally well, the flu will have symptoms such as a high temperature, sore throat, muscle pains, fatigue and headache.

- In Ireland, every year during the flu season 200-350 people die from flu and thousands of people need admission to hospital
- In the 2025/2026 flu season approximately 6,000 people were admitted to hospital with flu

What are the complications of flu infection?

Anyone can get sick with flu and serious complications can happen at any age.

However, some groups are particularly at risk of complications including older age groups and those with underlying medical conditions. In these groups flu infection can be life threatening.

Complications of flu include bronchitis, pneumonia, sepsis and rarely acute encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

Flu infection can make existing medical conditions such as heart disease worse.

If you are pregnant you can get seriously unwell with flu infection. Getting the flu vaccine will give you and your baby the best available protection against the serious complications of flu.

Why do I need the flu vaccine?

As a healthcare worker you are 10 times more likely to get the flu compared to the general public. You can get very unwell with flu and you may get serious complications even if you have no underlying medical conditions.

You can also spread flu infection to those you care for. Patients with weak immune systems and older patients can become very unwell and some may die from flu. They may not get sufficient protection from the flu vaccine themselves. By getting the flu vaccine you can help to keep them safe.

The flu vaccine gives you the best available protection against infection with flu and against the complications.

Who should be vaccinated for flu?

The flu vaccine is recommended for **all healthcare workers in any healthcare setting, including out of home care givers.**

- Medical, nursing and midwifery and paramedical staff and students
- Allied health professionals staff and students

- All GP practice staff
- Dental personnel
- Hospital staff including but not limited to porters, cleaners and catering
- General support staff
- Ambulance personnel
- Staff in disability and social care services especially those in residential settings
- Healthcare administrative staff
- Carers
- Any other healthcare staff who have contact with patients

When should I get the flu vaccine?

You should get your flu vaccine every year as soon as it is available. By getting the flu vaccine at the start of the flu season, before flu begins to spread, you can protect yourself and you can help to stop the spread of flu infection.

Why do I need the flu vaccine every year?

Each year the circulating flu viruses change, so each year the composition of the flu vaccine changes to provide protection from the strains of flu virus that are expected to spread during the flu season.

Should pregnant healthcare workers be vaccinated?

Yes. A seasonal flu vaccine is recommended in pregnancy. This is because if you are pregnant you can get seriously unwell with flu infection. Getting the flu vaccine will give you and your baby the best available protection against the serious complications of flu.

The flu vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy. It works by protecting pregnant women during pregnancy and it can provide protection to their newborn baby during the first few months of life.

If you are pregnant please read the HSE flu leaflet for pregnant women for more information.

What flu vaccine should I get if I am a healthcare worker and am 65 years or older?

People aged 65 years and older are recommended to get the adjuvanted (enhanced) flu vaccine this year. This enhanced flu vaccine is called Fluad. If you are 65 years and older you are at higher risk of serious illness from flu. As we get older our immune system may not respond as well to vaccines. The enhanced flu vaccine is designed to help your immune system respond better to give you stronger protection against flu.

For more information on the enhanced flu vaccine Fluad, please read the HSE leaflet Flu Vaccine Information for People at Risk.

Is there anyone who cannot get the flu vaccine?

Most people can get the flu vaccine.

It is not recommended for those who have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of flu vaccine or any of its ingredients.

Some people might not be able to get the flu vaccine. You should speak with your doctor/specialist team

- If you are on combination checkpoint inhibitors (e.g. ipilimumab plus nivolumab).
- If you have a confirmed egg allergy and needed ICU admission for a severe anaphylaxis to eggs.
- If you have a severe type of chemotherapy induced neutropenia (low levels of a type of white blood cell). You may need to wait to have the flu vaccine.

When should I delay getting the flu vaccine?

You may have to delay getting the flu vaccine if you are unwell – with a high temperature of more than 38°C – until you are better.

How long does it take the vaccine to work?

The flu vaccine starts to work within two weeks.

Can the vaccine give me the flu ?

No. The flu vaccine does not contain any live viruses and cannot cause flu infection. It takes 2 weeks for the flu vaccine to provide you with protection against the flu, and if you are in contact with the flu virus during this time, you may get the flu.

How safe is the flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines are very safe. Flu vaccines have been given for more than 60 years to millions of people worldwide. Further information around flu vaccine safety can be found in the Summary of Medicinal Products Leaflet on www.hpra.ie

What can I expect following vaccination?

The most common side effects are mild and may include soreness, redness or swelling where the injection was given. Other common symptoms include headache, aches and tiredness.

Where do I get vaccinated?

You may be able to get vaccinated in your workplace; you can contact your line manager, flu lead or the Infection Prevention and Control Team in your area for further information.

For all healthcare workers the flu vaccine is available, free of charge from your GP or community Pharmacist.

Can I receive other vaccines with the flu vaccine?

Yes, the flu vaccine and other vaccines, may be given at the same time.

Should I get a COVID-19 vaccine with my flu vaccine?

Not every healthcare worker is recommended a COVID-19 vaccine. However if you are a healthcare worker who is aged 60 years and older or with an underlying medical condition, then you are recommended a COVID-19 vaccine, as you are at a higher risk of complications from COVID-19 infection, including hospitalisation, ICU admission and death.

Healthcare workers are at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 and any healthcare worker who wishes to get a COVID-19 vaccine can do so.

You can get your flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time if you wish.

COVID-19 vaccines may be available in your workplace and all healthcare workers can get a free COVID-19 vaccine from their GP or community pharmacist.

For more information on COVID-19 please see the [HSE website](#)

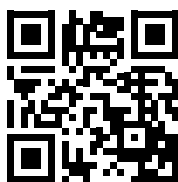


What do I do if I have symptoms of flu?

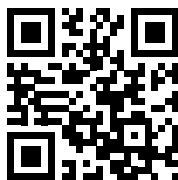
If you have symptoms of flu please stay at home. Do not go to work or visit hospitals, residential care facilities or vulnerable people. If you are unwell you should contact your GP or seek urgent medical attention if required.

For more information see:

www.hse.ie/flu



You can also find a link to the patient information leaflet for the vaccines (search for Influvac, Vaxigrip or Fluad) at www.hpra.ie



Reporting side effects

If you think you have had a side effect after receiving a vaccine, you can report it to the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) at www.hpra.ie. Your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or a family member can also report the side effect to the HPRA.



Protect yourself.
Protect others.

National Immunisation Office
www.hse.ie/flu
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