

Who Should be Immunized?^{1,2}

The CDC, with the support of leading health experts, now recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older be immunized.

Vaccination is important for everyone in the US, however, influenza immunization rates in the highest-risk groups fall far short of public health goals every year. Groups at higher risk of influenza infection or complications include:

- People 50 years of age and older
- Children 6 months–18 years of age
- Pregnant women
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, COPD, heart disease, diabetes, and others
- Residents of long-term care facilities and nursing homes

Additionally, those who come into close contact with high-risk groups should get vaccinated, not only to help protect themselves against influenza, but also to help avoid spreading the disease to more vulnerable populations. They include:

- Household contacts and caregivers of anyone in a high-risk group, including parents, siblings, grandparents, babysitters, and child care providers
- Health-care personnel

Note: Children younger than 9 years of age receiving an influenza vaccination for the first time need 2 doses approximately 1 month apart.¹

Vaccination—The Best Protection¹

Vaccination is safe and effective, and the best way to help prevent influenza and its complications. Although mild side effects from vaccination are possible (eg, mild local soreness or redness, headache, etc), a person cannot get influenza from the flu shot.

When Should I Receive an Influenza Immunization?¹

Annual immunization is the best way to help protect against influenza. We at the American Lung Association urge you and your loved ones to get vaccinated as soon as you can, whenever that is during the influenza season. You should be immunized as soon as vaccine is available in the late summer or early fall. If you didn't have a chance to obtain influenza vaccine early in the season, immunization throughout the season into the spring or as long as the influenza virus is in circulation is beneficial because in most seasons, influenza disease doesn't peak until that time. It only takes about 2 weeks for the vaccine to protect against the virus.

Who Should Not be Immunized?^{1,3}

Some people should not be vaccinated or should first talk with their health-care provider. These include:

- People with severe allergies to eggs
- People who have had a severe allergic reaction to a past influenza vaccination
- Children younger than 6 months of age, because no vaccine is licensed yet for this age group

Vaccination is safe and effective, and the best way to help prevent the flu, especially for those who cannot receive vaccine, such as children younger than 6 months of age.

www.facesofinfluenza.org

References:

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3. CDC. Prevention and control of influenza: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). 2008. *MMWR*. 2008;57(RR-7):1-64.
4. CDC. Deaths: Final data for 2006. National vital statistic reports. 2009. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_14.pdf. Accessed March 30, 2010.
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6. CDC. What you should know and do this flu season if you are 65 years and older. <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/65andolder.htm>. Accessed March 30, 2010.



WE ALL ARE "FACES" OF INFLUENZA

Learn More About Annual Influenza Vaccination for Everyone 6 Months of Age and Older



FACES OF INFLUENZA
American Lung Association's
Influenza Prevention Program
In collaboration with sanofi pasteur

We All Are “Faces” of Influenza

Health officials recommend that everyone 6 months of age and older receive an influenza vaccination each and every year.^{1,2} Most likely, this includes you and your entire family. Influenza is a serious respiratory illness that is easily spread and can lead to severe complications, even death, for you or someone with whom you come in contact.^{1,3} Combined with pneumonia, influenza is the nation's eighth leading cause of death.⁴

Despite these numbers, many of us think that influenza won't affect our families. The American Lung Association's *Faces of Influenza* educational initiative shows why protecting your family against this serious virus is so important. The “faces” of influenza—people 6 months of age and older who should be vaccinated against influenza this and every year—feature faces of celebrities, public health officials, and everyday people. Each shares their experience with influenza and why annual influenza vaccination is a priority for their families. Vaccination is safe and effective, and the best way to help prevent influenza and its complications.¹

Face the Facts of Influenza

Anyone can get influenza. In fact, up to 1 in 5 people in the US may get the virus each influenza season.⁵

Annual immunization is safe and effective, and the best way to help protect against the influenza virus and its complications. You should be immunized as soon as vaccine is available in the late summer or early fall. If you didn't have a chance to obtain influenza vaccine early in the season, immunization throughout the season into the spring or as long as the influenza virus is in circulation is beneficial because in most seasons, influenza disease doesn't peak until that time.¹

This year, the seasonal influenza vaccine will include the 2009 pandemic H1N1 strain, so only the seasonal influenza vaccine will be needed.² Hygiene measures such as washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and isolating sick people can help to prevent the spread of disease, but vaccination is the best way to help prevent influenza and its complications.¹

Influenza is serious. Get vaccinated.

Who is Most at Risk?¹

We all are at risk for contracting influenza. The results for some will be lost work or school days, but for those at highest risk, the results can be more serious. Each year in the US, on average, influenza and its related complications result in approximately 226,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths.¹

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages the following groups to make vaccination a priority, since they may have an increased risk of complications.

- **Those 65 years of age and older** are hardest hit by influenza. Nearly 90% of deaths caused by influenza and its

Meet Some “Faces” of Influenza

Every year, influenza results in serious consequences for thousands of people. Meet some “faces” of influenza—people who make vaccination a yearly priority.



Kristi Yamaguchi, Winner of “Dancing with the Stars,” Olympic Gold Medalist, and Mother

“As an athlete, my doctor stresses the importance of annual influenza vaccination to maintain my health. But now as a mother, I realize my whole family needs to be immunized, and that's a responsibility that I take seriously.”



Edmundo Hidalgo

“Not only do I want to keep my family healthy, but I also want others to understand how serious influenza can be, and that getting immunized can help protect them from becoming very ill.”

complications occur among this age group.⁶ Ask your health-care provider about your vaccination options.

- **People with chronic health conditions** are especially vulnerable to serious complications from influenza. This includes people with asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, and diabetes.¹
- **Children** typically experience the highest rates of influenza infection each year. Infants and children can develop severe cases and complications, such as pneumonia, seizures, and ear or sinus infections.^{1,3}



Richard and Alissa Kanowitz

“People need to understand that there are huge benefits to receiving the influenza vaccine. Amanda was the perfect little child, and she was taken away from us because of a virus that could have been prevented by vaccination.”



Tyra Bryant-Stephens, MD

“Hospitals, primary care practices, and intensive care units need to continue to work harder to raise vaccination levels for all staff to protect their own health, but more importantly, their patients' health.”



Eva Quiroz and son Jasper Quiroz-Hansen

“I protect my family in every way I can—I make sure we are all vaccinated against influenza every year.”