

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a 2013-2014 flu vaccine, ideally by October, however vaccination should continue throughout the flu season, even in January or later.

Questions & Answers about Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine – LAIV (the nasal spray flu vaccine, FluMist)

What flu viruses does the nasal spray vaccine protect against?

All nasal spray vaccine for the 2013-14 season is quadravalent. It will provide protection against four flu viruses: two influenza A and two influenza B viruses.

Who can be vaccinated with the nasal spray flu vaccine?

Healthy people age 2 through 49 years, who are not pregnant, can receive the nasal spray flu vaccine. "Healthy" indicates those without an underlying medical condition that predisposes them to influenza disease complications.

Who should not be vaccinated with the nasal spray flu vaccine?

- People with asthma; and children aged 2 through 4 years whose parents report that a health-care provider told them that their child had a wheezing episode or asthma during the preceding 12 months.
- Children and adults who have chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular (except isolated hypertension), renal, hepatic, neurologic/neuromuscular, hematologic, or metabolic disorders.
- Children and adults who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV).
- People with a history of severe allergic reaction to any component of the vaccine or to a previous dose of any influenza vaccine.

Moderate or severe acute illness with or without fever is a general precaution for any vaccination. Guillain-Barré Syndrome within 6 weeks following a previous dose of influenza vaccine is considered a precaution for use of influenza vaccines.

How effective is the nasal spray seasonal flu vaccine?

From a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on February 15, 2007:

“Among young children, live attenuated vaccine had significantly better efficacy than inactivated vaccine (IIV)”.
<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa065368>

From the MMWR 2013-14 influenza recommendations:

“Several studies have demonstrated superior efficacy of LAIV as compared with IIV among children”.
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6207a1.htm>

Can the nasal spray flu vaccine give you the flu?

No. While the nasal spray flu vaccine does contain live viruses (unlike the flu shot), the viruses are attenuated (weakened) and **cannot cause flu illness**. The weakened viruses are cold-adapted, which means they are designed to only cause infection at the cooler temperatures found within the nose. The viruses cannot infect the lungs or other areas where warmer temperatures exist.



If less than a full dose of LAIV is administered due to a patient's stuffy nose, sneezing, wiping or lack of cooperation, should another dose be administered?

No. Active inhalation (i.e., sniffing) is not required by the patient during vaccine administration. FluMist recipients can breathe normally during administration. Sniffing is not necessary. Dripping, sneezing, or swallowing may occur after vaccination. Re-vaccination is not necessary.

Should pregnant and postpartum women avoid contact with people who were recently vaccinated with the nasal spray vaccine?

No. Pregnant and postpartum women do not need to avoid contact with persons recently vaccinated with the nasal spray vaccine. However, the nasal spray vaccine is not licensed for use in women who are pregnant. Postpartum women, including those breastfeeding, can receive the flu shot or the nasal spray vaccine.

Can contacts of people with weakened immune systems get the nasal spray flu vaccine?

Yes. People who have contact with people with weakened (but not severely weakened) immune systems due to underlying illness can get the nasal spray vaccine.

However, people who are in contact with others with **severely** weakened immune systems when they are being cared for in a protective environment (for example, people with hematopoietic stem cell transplants), should not get the nasal spray vaccine.

Which healthcare workers (HCWs) can be given the intranasal live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) and which cannot?

LAIV can be administered to all HCWs for whom it is indicated based on age and health history--except to those who care for severely immunocompromised patients in a protected (reverse air flow) environment. To read more on this topic, see pages 35–37 in *Prevention and Control of Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) — United States, 2010–11 Influenza Season* found at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5908.pdf

Can people receiving the nasal spray flu vaccine pass the vaccine viruses to others?

Yes, but it's very rare. Data indicate that both children and adults vaccinated with nasal spray can shed vaccine viruses after vaccination, although in lower amounts than occur typically with shedding of wild-type influenza viruses. However, serious illnesses have not been reported among unvaccinated persons who have been infected inadvertently with vaccine viruses.

When a child needs 2 doses of influenza vaccine, can I give 1 dose of each type (injectable and nasal spray)?

Yes. As long as a child is eligible to receive nasal spray vaccine (i.e., is in the proper age range and health status), it is acceptable to give 1 dose of each type of influenza vaccine. The doses should be spaced at least 4 weeks apart.

Can a child who needs 2 doses of influenza receive 1 dose of quadrivalent vaccine and 1 dose of trivalent vaccine?

Yes. You can give these two vaccines as long as the 2 doses are appropriately spaced by 28 days or more.

If a child received her second MMR a week ago, how long should she wait before receiving live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV)?

LAIV can be administered simultaneously with another live vaccine (for example, MMR, varicella), but if the two are not given at the same time, ACIP recommends waiting four weeks before administering the second live vaccine. If a second live vaccine is inadvertently given between 1 and 27 days after the first vaccine, the second vaccine should be repeated.

