

# Influenza

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## What is the Influenza Vaccine?

The influenza vaccine, also known as the flu shot, is a vaccine that helps protect against the influenza virus. The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs.

The influenza vaccine works by exposing the body's immune system to a small amount of the virus or virus components, which allows the body to produce an immune response that can help fight off the virus if you are exposed to it later. The vaccine is usually made up of inactivated or weakened forms of the influenza virus or its components, such as proteins or sugars found on the surface of the virus.

## What to Expect:

The influenza vaccine is administered through a quick injection in the upper arm. After receiving the vaccine, it's common to experience some mild side effects, such as:

- Soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site (for the injectable vaccine)
- Runny nose or congestion (for the nasal spray vaccine)
- Low-grade fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches



These side effects are usually mild and go away on their own within a few days. In rare cases, more serious side effects can occur, such as an allergic reaction or Guillain-Barre syndrome. If you experience any unusual symptoms after receiving the vaccine, it's important to seek medical attention right away.

It's worth noting that the influenza vaccine is typically recommended annually, as the virus can mutate and change each year. It's important to keep up with these recommended vaccinations to ensure maximum protection against the flu.