
Influenza vaccine

Anyone can become seriously ill from influenza, but certain risk groups are more susceptible to severe disease than others. In Norway, almost 1.6 million children and adults are in one of these risk groups. The health benefits can be considerable if people in these risk groups get vaccinated.

Children and adults in the following risk groups should have the influenza vaccine annually:

- Anyone aged 65 or over
- Residents of nursing homes and care homes
- Children and adults suffering from:
 - chronic lung disease
 - chronic heart and vascular disorders
 - chronic liver failure
 - chronic renal failure
 - chronic neurological disorders or injury
 - impaired immune system
 - diabetes, types 1 and 2
 - morbid obesity (BMI over 40)
 - other serious or chronic disorders
- Pregnant women from week 12 of their pregnancy
- Children born prematurely, particularly those born before week 32 of pregnancy, from 6 months old (chronological age) up to 5 years.

Why should I have the vaccine?

Influenza can among other things cause severe pneumonia and exacerbate many chronic disorders. In the event of complications arising from influenza, admission to hospital will be necessary.

People with cardiovascular disease are more prone to heart attack, stroke, and death during the influenza season than at other times of the year. Severe influenza can lead to permanently impaired health and an increased need for health support. On average, 900 people die from influenza in Norway every year. Vaccination protects against severe influenza.

What does the vaccine protect against?

The influenza vaccine protects against the influenza virus 1-2 weeks after vaccination. The vaccine does not protect against coronavirus (COVID-19) or other viruses and bacteria which can also cause influenza-like symptoms.

Common symptoms of influenza are rapid onset of illness, fever, dry cough, fatigue, headache, and muscle pain for 3–10 days.

Why should you have the vaccine every year?

You should have the vaccine every year because the influenza virus is constantly changing, and the vaccine must be altered to account for this. In addition, the vaccine effect diminishes over time.

Does the vaccine have any side effects?

Vaccines against seasonal influenza have been used for many years and generally have only minor side effects. Like other vaccines, it can cause tenderness, redness and swelling around the injection site, as well as muscle pain. Allergic reactions and other severe side effects are very rare.

The influenza vaccine does not cause influenza.

How can I get the influenza vaccine?

Check with your doctor's surgery or on the municipality's website.

More information may be found on the Norwegian Institute of Public Health's website:

<https://www.fhi.no/en/id/influenza/seasonal-influenza/>