

On August 24, 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released their official report on recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the 2018 to 2019 flu season.

Who is recommended to receive vaccination?

- It is recommended persons 6 months of age and older receive a yearly influenza (flu) vaccination with an FDA-approved, recommended, age-appropriate vaccine, unless contraindications exist.

What are the important updates to the 2018-19 recommendations?

- The live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), also known as the nasal spray vaccine (FluMist Quadrivalent®), is an option for vaccination again this year for eligible persons.

What type of influenza vaccines are available this year?

- Formulations available this year include inactivated vaccines, a recombinant vaccine, and the LAIV. All three of these formulations are available as quadrivalent vaccines, and the inactivated vaccines will also be available in a trivalent formulation this year.
- In addition, two other inactivated vaccines are available as trivalent formulations and approved for use in persons 65 years of age and older. These vaccines are a high-dose formulation (Fluzone High-Dose®) and a formulation which contains an adjuvant (Fluad®).

What is the difference between a trivalent and quadrivalent vaccine?

- Trivalent vaccines protect against three influenza strains or subtypes, whereas the quadrivalent influenza vaccines protect against four influenza strains (contains an additional B virus antigen).

Is any specific vaccine recommended over the other vaccines?

- No preference is given for one influenza vaccine over another when more than one product is appropriate.
- For the 2018–19 season, vaccination with any of these formulations of influenza vaccines, (the inactivated, recombinant, or the live attenuated vaccine), that are FDA-approved and appropriate based on the individual’s age can be used.

Why did the CDC change their stance on the nasal spray vaccine?

- In contrast with the past two years, the CDC has changed their recommendations regarding the LAIV known as FluMist Quadrivalent®. This nasally administered flu vaccine was not recommended by ACIP during the prior two flu seasons from 2016-17 and 2017-18 due to concerns regarding efficacy.
- The ACIP reviewed new data available this year and has determined **the nasal spray vaccine is an option for appropriate individuals for the upcoming influenza season**. The nasal spray vaccine is only for use in individuals 2 years of age through 49 years. It is not appropriate for certain individuals, including women who are pregnant as well as persons who are immunocompromised.

What other updates were included in this year's recommendations?

- The updated recommendations also include information regarding administration of vaccines to persons with a history of egg allergy. Vaccine products with expanded age populations for this upcoming flu season are also discussed.

Are there other needle-free options available besides the nasal spray vaccine?

- Other needle-free options include Afluria® and Afluria Quadrivalent® which can be given to individuals aged 18 through 64 years via a jet injector (PharmaJet®).

What options are available for persons 65 years and older?

- For individuals 65 years and older, any age-appropriate inactivated influenza vaccine or the recombinant inactivated vaccine may be used. There are two vaccines currently available that are indicated specifically for individuals aged 65 years and older:
 - o Flud® is an inactivated trivalent standard-dose influenza vaccine that contains an adjuvant designed to enhance the immune response.
 - o Fluzone High-Dose® is an inactivated trivalent influenza vaccine that contains a higher dose of each antigen to improve the immune response and thereby provide improved protection against influenza.
- Although these products are indicated specifically for persons aged 65 years and older, no preference is given regarding use of Flud or Fluzone High-Dose over another age-appropriate influenza vaccine. In other words, these persons can receive an inactivated vaccine that contains the standard-dose or a high-dose, with or without an adjuvant, or a recombinant vaccine. It is important to note the nasal spray vaccine is only for individuals 2 years of age through 49 years.

When is the best time to get vaccinated?

- The CDC recommends vaccination prior to the end of October, if possible, for persons 6 months of age and older who do not have contraindications.
- However, influenza vaccination should continue to be offered by health care providers as long as the influenza virus is continuing to spread and unexpired vaccine is available.

What is the role of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)?

- ACIP provides recommendations to the CDC regarding the use of vaccines for protection against vaccine-preventable illnesses in the U.S. Once these recommendations have been reviewed by the CDC Director, if adopted, the recommendations are published as official CDC recommendations.

Additional Resources

To view the 2018 to 2019 Influenza Vaccine Recommendations in their entirety, including a list of products available this season and product specific contraindications/precautions, view the [CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#). For general information on influenza, please visit the [CDC website](#). A summary of the main changes and updates for this year's recommendations can be viewed at the [CDC Health Professionals' webpage](#).

The CDC also has provided a summary document for the 2018 to 2019 influenza recommendations: [Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines](#). This document provides additional detail regarding vaccination of specific patient populations, including pregnant women, immunocompromised individuals, older adults, children, and those with a history of egg allergy, in a user-friendly format.

References:

1. Grohskopf LA, Sokolow LZ, Broder KR, Walter EB, Fry AM, Jernigan DB. Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices—United States, 2018–19 Influenza Season. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2018;67(No. RR-3):1–20. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr6703a1>.
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3. Influenza ACIP Vaccine Recommendations. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/flu.html>. Updated September 5, 2018. Accessed September 24, 2018.
4. Frequently Asked Flu Questions 2018-2019 Influenza Season. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2018-2019.htm>. Updated August 30, 2018. Accessed September 26, 2018.
5. Fluzone High-Dose Seasonal Influenza Vaccine: Questions and Answers. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/ga_fluzone.htm. Updated December 14, 2017. Accessed September 26, 2018.
6. Flud Flu Vaccine with Adjuvant. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/adjuvant.htm>. Reviewed December 14, 2017. Accessed September 26, 2018.