

Immediate Release:

2018-19 Influenza Season CDC Recommendations

On August 24, 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released their official report regarding recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP*) for the 2018 to 2019 influenza (flu) season. It is recommended persons 6 months of age and older receive an annual influenza vaccination with an FDA-approved, recommended, age-appropriate vaccine, unless contraindications exist. The live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), also known as the nasal spray vaccine (FluMist Quadrivalent®), is a potential option for vaccination again this year for eligible persons.

Formulations available this year include inactivated vaccines, a recombinant vaccine, and the LAIV. All three of these formulations will be available as quadrivalent vaccines, and the inactivated vaccines will also be available in a trivalent formulation this year. Trivalent vaccines provide protection against three influenza strains or subtypes, whereas the quadrivalent influenza vaccines provide protection against four influenza strains (contain an additional B virus antigen).

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

Timing of Vaccination

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.

Updated Recommendations on the Nasal Spray Vaccine

In contrast with the past two years, the CDC has revised the previous recommendations regarding the intranasal live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) known as FluMist Quadrivalent®. This nasally administered flu vaccine was not recommended by ACIP during the prior two influenza seasons from 2016-17 and 2017-18 due to concerns regarding efficacy.

However, the ACIP has 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, and it is not appropriate for certain individuals, including women who are pregnant as well as persons who are immunocompromised. Other needle-free options, apart from the nasal spray vaccine, include

Afluria[®] and Afluria Quadrivalent[®] which can be given to individuals aged 18 through 64 years via a jet injector (PharmaJet[®]).

Additional Updates to the 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.

Options for Persons 65 Years and Older

For individuals 65 years and older, any age-appropriate inactivated influenza vaccine or the recombinant inactivated vaccine is acceptable. There are two vaccines currently available that are indicated specifically for individuals aged 65 years and older:

- Flud[®] is an inactivated trivalent standard-dose influenza vaccine that contains an adjuvant designed to enhance the immune response.
- 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. It is important to note the nasal spray vaccine is only for individuals 2 years of age through 49 years.

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](#). For a summary of the main changes and updates for this year's recommendations, please view 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.

**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.*

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>.
2. Table 1. Influenza vaccines – United States, 2018-19 influenza season. Centers for Disease Control website. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/rr/rr6703a1.htm?s_cid=rr6703a1_e. Updated August 23, 2018. Accessed September 24, 2018.
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/qa_fluzone.htm. Updated December 14, 2017. Accessed September 26, 2018.
6. Fluad 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.