



---

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Influenza Virus Vaccine (Live/Attenuated)

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

FluMist

## Brand Names: Canada

FluMist Quadrivalent

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent the flu.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug? For all patients taking this drug:

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods (like eggs), or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have taken any antiviral drugs to treat the flu within the past 48 hours.

## Children:

- If your child is taking aspirin.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- This drug may not protect all people who use it. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug is not a cure for the flu. It must be given before you are exposed to the flu in order to work. Most of the time, it takes a few weeks for this drug to work.
- This drug only protects you for 1 flu season. You will need to get the flu vaccine each year.
- If you will be in close contact with someone who has a weak immune system, talk with your doctor. You may need to avoid contact with certain people who have a weak immune system for some time after you get this drug.
- Wheezing has happened after this drug was given. The chance may be raised in children younger than 5 years of age who have wheezing. The chance may also be raised in people of any age who have asthma. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug is not approved for use in children younger than 2 years of age. The chance of bad wheezing and the need to be treated in a hospital is raised in these children. Talk with the doctor.
- Some children may need to have more than 1 dose of this vaccine. Talk with your child's doctor.
- Do not give to children and teenagers who are taking aspirin due to the chance of Reye's syndrome. Reye's syndrome causes very bad problems to the brain and liver. Children and teenagers must not be given aspirin for 4 weeks after getting this drug unless the doctor says otherwise.

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Flushing.
- Diarrhea, stomach cramps, or throwing up.
- Chest pain.
- Dizziness or passing out.

## **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

### **For all patients taking this drug:**

- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Slight tickle or dripping in the nose.
- Sneezing.
- Headache.
- Muscle pain.

- Feeling tired or weak.
- Decreased appetite.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat.
- Cough.

## Young children:

- Feeling irritable.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

Report side effects to the FDA/CDC Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) at <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html> or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

## How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- For the nose only.
- If you are using this drug at home, be sure you know how to use it. Read the patient instructions that come with this drug. If there are no instructions or you have any questions about how to use this drug, talk with the doctor or pharmacist.
- Do not get this drug in the eyes, mouth, or on the skin.
- Do not use this drug if it has been dropped or if it is broken.
- This drug is colorless to a faint yellow. Do not use if the solution changes color.
- If you see small air bubbles in the device, do not try to get rid of them.

- Breathe normally while using this drug. Do not inhale or sniff.

## **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

## **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Do not use if it has been frozen.
- Store in the outer carton to protect from light.
- If needed, this drug may be stored at room temperature up to 77°F (25°C) for 12 hours. If stored at room temperature and not used within 12 hours, it may be put back into the refrigerator. If this drug has been stored at room temperature, use it as soon as possible. Do not store this drug outside the refrigerator a second time.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## **General drug facts**

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your

doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## **Additional Information**

Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) are made by the staff of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Each VIS gives information to properly inform the adult receiving the vaccine or, in the case of a minor, the child's parent or legal representative about the risks and benefits of each vaccine. Before a doctor vaccinates a child or an adult, the provider is required by the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act to give a copy of the VIS. You can also get foreign language versions.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/current-vis/influenza-live-intranasal.html>

## **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at

<https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms>.

## Last Reviewed Date

2025-10-31

## Copyright

© 2025 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

Influenza Virus Vaccine (Live/Attenuated - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center