

Frequently Asked Questions About Nasal-Spray Flu Vaccine LAIV (FluMist®)

Who can be vaccinated with the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®)?

LAIV (FluMist®) is approved for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.

Who should not be vaccinated with the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®)?

- People less than 2 years of age
- People 50 years of age and over
- People with a medical condition that places them at high risk for complications from influenza, including those with chronic heart or lung disease, such as asthma or reactive airways disease; people with medical conditions such as diabetes or kidney failure; or people with illnesses that weaken the immune system, or who take medications that can weaken the immune system.
- Children <5 years old with a history of recurrent wheezing
- Children or adolescents receiving aspirin
- People with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare disorder of the nervous system
- Pregnant women
- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs or who are allergic to any of the nasal spray vaccine components.

Should FluMist® be given to patients with chronic diseases other than those specifically listed above?

No. The nasal-spray flu vaccine is approved for use only in healthy* people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.

Are there any contraindications to giving breastfeeding mothers FluMist®?

Breastfeeding is not a contraindication for FluMist®. For a list of contraindications for FluMist®, see www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5306a1.htm

Can I give FluMist® to patients when they are ill?

You can give FluMist® to people with minor illnesses (e.g., diarrhea or mild upper respiratory tract infection with or without fever). However, if someone has nasal congestion that might limit delivery of the vaccine to the nasal lining, consider delaying the vaccination until the nasal congestion is reduced.

Can people receiving the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®) pass the vaccine viruses to others?

In clinical studies, transmission of vaccine viruses to close contacts has occurred only rarely. The current estimated risk of getting infected with vaccine virus after close contact with a person vaccinated with the nasal-spray flu vaccine is low (0.6%-2.4%). Because the viruses are weakened, infection is unlikely to result in influenza illness symptoms since the vaccine viruses have not been shown to mutate into typical or naturally occurring influenza viruses.

Can close contacts of people with weakened immune systems get FluMist®?

- **Contacts who should NOT get FluMist®:** people who are in contact with others with severely weakened immune systems when they are being cared for in a protective environment (for example, people with hematopoietic stem cell transplants)
- **Contacts who CAN get FluMist®:** people who have contact with others with lesser degrees of immunosuppression (for example, people with diabetes, people with asthma taking corticosteroids, persons who have recently received chemotherapy or radiation but who are not being cared for in a protective environment as defined above, or people infected with HIV)

Can healthcare workers receive FluMist®?

Yes. LAIV may be used for vaccination of healthy, nonpregnant healthcare workers less than 50 years of age. When feasible, use of LAIV for vaccination of eligible healthcare workers is especially encouraged during periods of limited supply of inactivated influenza vaccine because use of FluMist® for HCP might increase availability of inactivated influenza vaccine for persons at high risk. (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm>)

What about healthcare workers who care for immunosuppressed persons?

- As a precautionary measure, healthcare workers who receive FluMist® should avoid providing care for patients **severely** weakened immune systems **when they are being cared for in a protective environment** (for example, patients with hematopoietic stem cell transplants in protective isolation) for 7 days after vaccination.
- Healthcare workers who have contact with others with lesser degrees of immunosuppression (for example, people with diabetes, people with asthma taking corticosteroids, or people infected with HIV) **CAN** get FluMist®.

Why does Public Health and the CDC encourage LAIV (FluMist®) vaccination for eligible healthcare workers when supplies of inactivated influenza vaccine are limited?

If eligible healthcare workers can get FluMist®, it may increase the availability of inactivated influenza vaccine for persons at high risk. For more information, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm>

Can people who have received FluMist® visit patients in the hospital?

Hospital visitors who have received FluMist® can visit people with lesser degrees of immunosuppression (for example, people with diabetes, people with asthma taking corticosteroids, or people infected with HIV). However, they should avoid contact with **severely** immunosuppressed persons in protected environments for 7 days after vaccination.

Does FluMist® contain thimerosal?

No, the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (**FluMist®**) does not contain thimerosal or any other preservative..

For more information, please see:

1. CDC Q&A on LAIV <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/nasalspray.htm>
2. Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel: Recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm>
3. Influenza and Influenza Vaccine Information for Healthcare Personnel http://www.cdc.gov/NCIDOD/DHQP/id_influenza_vaccine.html
4. Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines - 2009-10 Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr58e0724a1.htm>