



QUESTIONS Q & A FOR PARENTS ANSWERS

ACVIP : 2020 - 2021

INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINES

What is Influenza?

- ✦ Influenza is a viral respiratory infection, which occurs globally and spreads from person to person. In India, influenza spreads throughout the year with peaks in the monsoon season and winter.
- ✦ The risk of flu complications is greatest in children less than 5 years of age, those with weak immune system and long-standing disorders of the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys and diabetes. Children play an important role in spreading the infection to others in the community.
- ✦ Children usually present with cough, cold, fever, chills, muscle pains, headaches. The illness usually lasts for 5-7 days.
- ✦ Flu can result in complications such as pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections.
- ✦ Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent infection and severe outcomes.

Which are the vaccines available against the flu?

1. Live, weakened vaccine, which is administered into the nose. This vaccine cannot be used in those < 2 years of age, in pregnancy and in persons with weakened immune systems.
2. Vaccine made from killed germs.

Each dose of the vaccine contains 4 different strains of the Influenza virus. The composition of vaccine may change twice, every year, as the Influenza virus periodically undergoes changes in its structure.

What is the schedule of the Influenza vaccines?

- ✦ 6 months to 8 years of age: 2 doses of 0.5 ml (15ug), at an interval of at least 4 weeks, when given for the first time (unprimed) and subsequently one dose annually.
- ✦ >8 years of age: 1 dose of 0.5ml (15ug) by intramuscular injection, annually.
- ✦ Vaccination should start at least 2 to 4 weeks before influenza season.

Is it a safe vaccine?

Generally, it is a safe vaccine. Soreness, redness, and swelling at the site of the injection may be seen after the vaccination. Fever, muscle aches, and headache can happen after influenza vaccine.

Who should receive this vaccine?

All children between 6 months and 5 years should receive this vaccine every year.

Children who are at high risk for complications of Influenza, should receive the annual dose even beyond the age of 5 years. Your doctor will guide you regarding the need for this vaccine beyond the age of 5 years.

Who should not receive the vaccine?

- ✦ Any child who had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of influenza vaccine, or has any severe, life-threatening allergies to any vaccine component.
- ✦ Any person who had a nervous system disorder called Guillain Barré Syndrome.
- ✦ Children with severe egg allergy should receive the vaccine in a setting with facilities for handling emergencies.
- ✦ If your child has mild egg allergy (only rashes), the vaccine can be administered, following which the child should remain in the clinic for 30 minutes after vaccination.

For more information, please contact your doctor.

