



Nasal Spray Flu Vaccine

What is the nasal spray flu vaccine?

The nasal spray flu vaccine is a new flu vaccine that was licensed in 2003. It is sometimes called “Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine” or LAIV because it uses a weakened but still live influenza virus instead of the killed or inactivated virus that is used in other flu vaccines. It is sold commercially under the brand name FluMist™.

Who can use this vaccine?

Only healthy people between 5 and 49 years should use this vaccine. Because it uses a live virus, children under 5 years old, adults over 49 years old, pregnant women, people with Guillain-Barre syndrome (an illness where the body attacks its own nerve cells), anyone with a weakened immune system, and anyone with a chronic disease should not use this vaccine. An otherwise healthy person who is only temporarily sick can use this vaccine, but if he or she has congestion, the vaccine may not work as well. Anyone who works closely or lives with a person who has a severely weakened immune system should not use this vaccine. Health Care workers may use this vaccine if they do not come in contact with patients who have a severely weakened immune system (for example, bone marrow transplant patients).

Can breast-feeding mothers use this vaccine?

Yes.

Can the vaccine be given at the same time as other vaccines?

Yes. If the other vaccines use killed or inactivated virus, then they may be given either before, after, or at the same time as the nasal spray flu vaccine. If they use a live virus, they may be given during the same visit. If they are not given during the same visit, they should be given more than four weeks apart.

Can someone who is on antiviral medicine get the nasal spray flu vaccine?

If someone is taking influenza antiviral medicine, he or she should not get the nasal spray flu vaccine until at least 48 hours after the last dose of medicine. If someone takes the nasal spray flu vaccine and then becomes ill, he or she should not use influenza antiviral medicines for at least 2 weeks after the vaccine was given.

Can someone who got a flu vaccine shot last year get the nasal spray flu vaccine this year?

Yes.

Can someone who gets this vaccine pass the virus on to others?

It is rare, but it is possible. As a result, anyone who works closely or lives with a person who has a severely weakened immune system should not use this vaccine.

Certain children under 9 years old require two doses of vaccine if they have not been previously vaccinated, so do both doses need to be the same type?

No, the two doses do not have to match. If the flu shot is given for the first dose, the nasal spray flu vaccine should be given at least 4 weeks later. If the nasal spray flu vaccine is used first, the second vaccine should be given between 6 and 10 weeks later.

Is there any thimerosal in the nasal spray flu vaccine?

No. There are no preservatives in this vaccine.

Does the person giving the vaccine need to wear gloves?

No. Gloves and mask are not required when giving the nasal spray flu vaccine.