

What is the pneumococcal vaccine?

- The vaccine is made of purified proteins and protects against different types of pneumococcal bacteria.
- Healthy adults who get the vaccine develop protection to most or all of these pneumococcal bacteria within two to three weeks of getting the shot.

Who should be vaccinated for pneumococcus?

Anyone can get pneumococcal disease, but some people are at greater risk of getting the disease and of becoming very seriously ill. People who should be vaccinated include anyone who is 65 years of age and over, as well as younger people who have special health problems such as alcoholism, heart or lung disease, kidney failure, diabetes, HIV infection or cancer.

What are the side effects of the pneumococcal vaccine?

- The vaccine is well tolerated with few side effects.
- The most common side effect is a sore arm.
- The only serious, but very rare, side effect is an allergic reaction.

What should I do if I still have questions about the influenza or pneumococcal vaccines?

If you have further questions or concerns about getting vaccinated against influenza or pneumococcus, please ask your doctor, nurse or health-care provider.

For more information about influenza and the influenza vaccine, visit:

Health Canada

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/dc-ma/influenza-eng.php

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/publichealth/flu

or call the ServiceOntario INFOLine at:

1-877-844-1944

TTY 1-800-387-5559

TTY (Toronto) 416-327-4282

Hours of operation: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information about the pneumococcal vaccine, visit:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-ppv.pdf

MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL
Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Health Complex



Infection Control

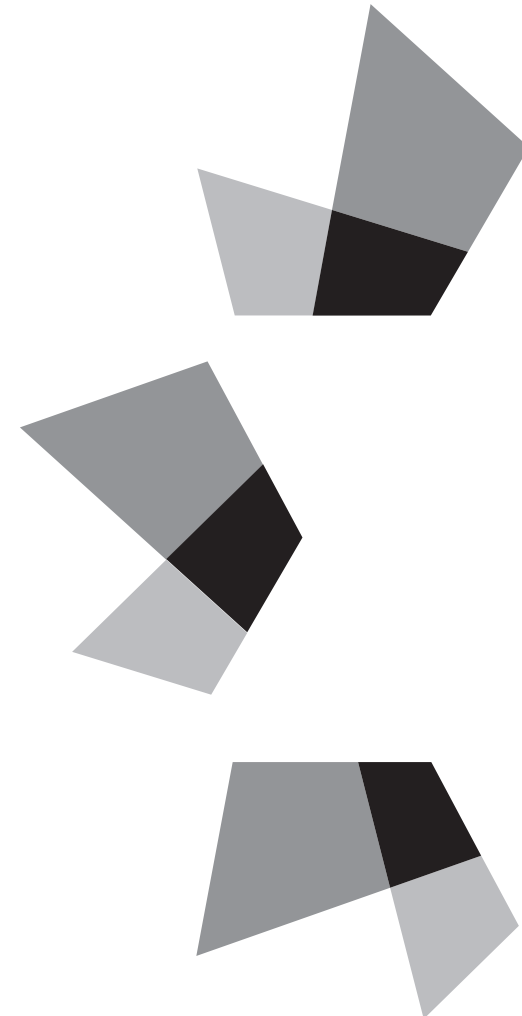
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Infection Control

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine and Pneumococcal Vaccine Information



Mount Sinai Hospital is dedicated to delivering safe patient and family-centred care.

We offer influenza vaccines (flu shots) to all patients admitted between October and January. We recommend that you get a vaccination if you have not had one this year.

If your illness means that you are at risk of serious pneumococcal infection, and you have not received the pneumococcal vaccine, we will offer you one.

What is influenza?

- Influenza is a disease caused by an influenza virus infection.
- Symptoms may include fever, headache, runny nose, cough and muscle aches. People usually start to feel sick between 18 hours and four days after exposure to someone with influenza.
- Influenza is often called “the flu”, but people use the term “flu” to refer to many other infections as well. Influenza can be mistaken for the “common cold”. However, flu symptoms are usually more severe
- In Canada, almost all influenza occurs in a 10 to 12 week period, some time between November and March.
- Influenza can affect anyone. About one in six people get influenza every year.
- Influenza can cause serious complications such as pneumonia and worsen existing medical conditions in pregnant women, young children, the elderly and people with chronic illness.

How easily is influenza spread?

Influenza is very easily spread by touch (e.g. kissing, shaking hands and then touching the face), as well as by droplets expelled during breathing, talking, sneezing or coughing. When one person in a household has influenza, there is a 15 per cent chance that someone else will get it.

What is the influenza vaccine?

- Flu vaccines are a safe and effective means of preventing both mild and severe cases of influenza.
- The flu vaccine is made up of purified proteins from **killed** influenza viruses.
- The flu vaccine starts working a few days after you get it and is fully effective after 14 days. It will continue to protect you for at least nine months.
- Because there are different influenza strains every year, the vaccine is updated annually to ensure that current influenza virus strains are covered. You should get an influenza vaccination every year, preferably in October or November.
- As the vaccine is made up of killed virus, it will not cause influenza. It will only cause your body to create antibodies to protect against the virus.

What are the side effects of the influenza vaccine?

- The most common side effect is a sore arm (at the site of injection) following vaccination. This usually lasts for a few hours but in some instances may last a few days.

- About one in 10,000 people experience red, itchy eyes, dry cough and sore throat. These symptoms are usually mild and last only a few hours.
- Studies have found no adverse long-term effects.
- The new purified influenza vaccines we use do not cause fever, tiredness or muscle aches.

Is there anyone who should not get vaccinated?

- People who are allergic to eggs (have hives, facial swelling or anaphylaxis when they eat eggs) should not get the flu shot because the vaccine may contain traces of egg protein.
- People who have had allergic reactions to other vaccines should consult a physician before being vaccinated.

What is *Streptococcus pneumoniae*?

- *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, or pneumococcus, is a bacteria that causes ear infections and meningitis in children, and pneumonia, bloodstream infections and meningitis, in adults.
- According to the Center for Disease Control, about one in every 20 people who get pneumonia die from the infection; two people out of 10 who get bloodstream infections will die; and three people out of 10 who get meningitis will die.
- Antibiotics such as penicillin were once effective in treating all cases of infection due to the pneumococcus. Today, however, antibiotic resistance is making these bacteria more difficult to treat. This makes preventing disease through vaccination even more important.