



FULTON COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Frequently Asked Questions About the Nasal-Spray **FluMist®**

Can the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®) give you the flu?

The nasal spray flu vaccine does contain live virus; however, the virus is attenuated. This means the live, disease-producing virus was modified in the laboratory to produce an organism that can grow and produce immunity in the body without causing illness. The modified virus is cold-adapted, which means they are designed to only cause infection at the cooler temperatures found within the nose. The virus cannot infect the lungs or other areas where warmer temperatures exist. Some people have reported experiencing mild reactions after receiving nasal spray flu vaccine, including runny nose, nasal congestion or cough, chills, tiredness/weakness, sore throat and headache. These side effects are mild and short-lasting, especially when compared to symptoms of influenza infection.

Who can be vaccinated with the nasal-spray flu vaccine?

The nasal-spray flu vaccine 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®)?

- Children 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 airway disease; people with medical conditions such as diabetes or kidney failure; people with illnesses that weaken the immune system, or who take medications that can weaken the immune system
- Children less than 5 years of age with a history of recurrent wheezing
- Children or adolescents receiving aspirin therapy
- People with a history of Guillain–Barré Syndrome that occurred after receiving influenza vaccine
- Pregnant women
- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs or who are allergic to any of the nasal spray vaccine components

How effective is the nasal-spray seasonal flu vaccine?

In one large study among children, the seasonal nasal-spray flu vaccine reduced the chance of influenza illness by 92% compared with placebo.

Does the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®) contain thimerosal?

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

Should pregnant women avoid people vaccinated with nasal spray vaccine?

No. Pregnant women do not need to avoid contact with persons recently vaccinated with the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®).

Can breastfeeding mothers receive the nasal spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®)?

The nasal spray vaccine can be used in healthy people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant and in women after they deliver, even if they are nursing. Breastfeeding is fully compatible with flu vaccination and preventing the flu in mothers can reduce the chance that the infant will get the flu. Also, by breastfeeding, mothers can pass on to the infant the antibodies that their bodies make in response to the flu shots, which can reduce the infant's chances of getting sick with the flu. This is especially important for infants less than 6 months old, who have no other way of receiving vaccine antibodies, since they are too young to be vaccinated.

How is the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine different from the seasonal nasal spray vaccine?

The 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine is being made in the same way as the seasonal nasal spray vaccine, but instead of containing three weakened live flu viruses, it only contains the modified 2009 H1N1 virus. The recommendations for who can get the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine are the same as for seasonal nasal spray vaccine. LAIV is recommended for use in healthy people 2 years to 49 years of age who are **not** pregnant.

Can the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®) be given to patients when they are ill?

The nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®) can be given to people with minor illnesses, however, if nasal congestion is present that might limit delivery of the vaccine to the nasal lining.

Can the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine and the seasonal nasal spray vaccine be given at the same time to the same person?

No. The seasonal nasal spray vaccine and the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine *should not be given at the same time*. This is because the nasal spray vaccines might not be as effective if given together. It is fine to receive the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray at the same time as the seasonal influenza (flu) shot, or the seasonal flu shot at the same time as the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine.

Can people receiving the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV (FluMist®) pass the vaccine virus 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 virus is modified, infection is unlikely to result in influenza illness.

For more information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/nasalspray.htm>

<http://www.vaccineinformation.org/flu/qandavax.asp>