

## What is Influenza?

Influenza (the flu), is an infection that primarily attacks the respiratory system but can affect other body systems. It is often mistaken for the common cold, but is much more serious and causes over 3000 deaths in Canada each year. During fall and winter respiratory seasons, this virus in combination with COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can cause strain on our healthcare system.

## What causes Influenza?

Influenza is caused by different strains of the influenza virus. There are many different strains of influenza viruses, and the viruses change every year. As a result, vaccines have to be adjusted annually to reflect these mutations to the virus and to keep you protected from illness.



## What are the symptoms of Influenza?

Influenza is much more serious than a common cold. Along with respiratory symptoms, infections can also lead to complications, such as increased **risk of heart attacks or stroke** following an infection.

### Common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle aches
- Extreme fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Cough

## Who is at highest risk for Influenza?



**Young children**



**People with weakened immune systems**



**older adults (65+)**



**People with chronic health conditions**

## What are the current Influenza vaccine guidelines?

To prevent the spread of influenza at work and in the community, a yearly vaccine is recommended for **everyone 6 months and older**. These vaccines become available in the early to mid fall every year at **pharmacies, public health, and family physician offices**. The influenza vaccine is known to be very safe.

Along with vaccines, people can prevent the spread of influenza by hand-washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick.



**Vaccination remains one of the best ways to safeguard yourself from preventable diseases, reduce the risk of serious illness and complications and prevent the spread of disease to others. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more about how vaccination can support you and your families health and wellness.**