

INFLUENZA
CAN BE SERIOUS
IF YOU HAVE A
HEALTH PROBLEM
Get vaccinated





Influenza can be serious if you have an underlying health problem



What is influenza?

Most people who get influenza recover quickly without requiring medical attention. However, for people with underlying health problems, influenza can be a severe or even fatal disease. For instance, if you already have diabetes, or a heart or respiratory problem, influenza might seriously worsen your health.

Influenza is an infectious disease that spreads from person to person mainly by coughing, sneezing and by close contact. Influenza symptoms begin suddenly and can last from a few days to several weeks. Common symptoms include fever and chills, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle pain and tiredness.

Why do some health problems increase your risk of becoming severely ill from influenza?

Influenza infection can worsen pre-existing conditions such as heart problems, diabetes or chronic lung diseases, and result in hospitalization.

Also, people with underlying health problems are more likely to have a weakened immune system, due either to the illness itself (e.g. HIV infection, diabetes) or to its treatment (e.g. steroids, chemotherapy). This makes it harder to fight influenza infection and increases the risk for complications, such as pneumonia.

Which underlying health conditions increase your risk for influenza?

A number of chronic diseases or underlying health problems can increase your risk of serious influenza complications.

These include:

Extreme obesity, asthma, chronic liver disease, chronic aspirin therapy in children, chronic kidney disease, weakened immune system, chronic lung diseases, heart conditions, diabetes, neurological conditions and neurodevelopment disorder.



What is the best protection against influenza?

Getting vaccinated every year before the influenza season starts is the best way to:

- Reduce the risk of getting influenza
- Reduce the risks of severe disease, hospitalization and death

If you are pregnant and have an underlying health problem, getting vaccinated is particularly important – both for you and your baby.

Is influenza vaccination safe?

It is safe to get vaccinated. Any side-effects of influenza vaccination are usually mild and include soreness and redness at the injection site. Some people experience headache, muscle pain, fever, tiredness and nausea. These side-effects are mild and pass quickly, unlike influenza.



Vaccination is safe

www.euro.who.int/en/fluaware