



**INFLUENZA**  
**CAN BE SERIOUS**  
**IF YOU'RE OVER 65**  
**GET VACCINATED**



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

**Europe**

## Influenza can be serious when you are over 65

Between 80% and 90% of all influenza-related deaths occur in people over the age of 65. Elderly people are also at much greater risk of being hospitalized due to influenza than younger healthy adults. This is because the immune system weakens with age and becomes less effective in fighting infections, including influenza.



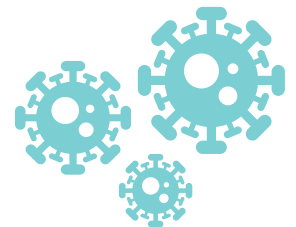
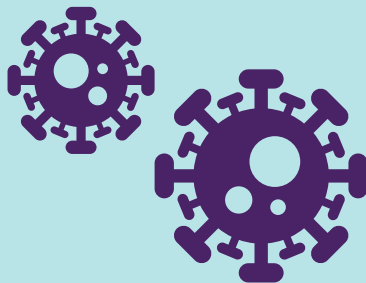
### What is influenza?

Influenza is an infectious disease that spreads from person to person mainly by coughing, sneezing and close contact. Influenza epidemics usually occur in winter. Anyone at any age can be infected with influenza.

### What are the symptoms of influenza?

**Fever and chills, cough, muscle pain, headache and tiredness.**

Influenza symptoms begin suddenly and can last from a few days to up to two weeks. Most people recover quickly, but, sometimes, influenza can cause serious complications, including pneumonia and bronchitis, and even death. Influenza can also worsen existing health problems, such as heart and lung diseases.



## 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 risk of severe disease, hospitalization and death
- Help prevent influenza from spreading to family, friends and other people

## Is influenza vaccination safe?

It is safe to get vaccinated. Any side-effects of influenza vaccination are usually minor 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](http://www.euro.who.int/en/fluaware)