



Bundesinstitut für
Öffentliche Gesundheit

ROBERT KOCH INSTITUT



Flu Vaccines

As a medical practitioner, protect yourself and others



infektionsschutz.de
Wissen, was schützt.

Why do medical practitioners need to be vaccinated against flu?

Medical practitioners are at increased risk of contracting flu viruses. **Having a flu vaccine will provide personal protection and reduce the spread of flu viruses.** Patients and those around them, including family members and other contact persons, are therefore also provided with the best possible protection. It is therefore recommended that medical practitioners have a flu vaccine each year.

What is flu and what are the symptoms?

Flu (influenza) is an **infectious disease caused by flu viruses**. It can be **severe or even life-threatening** and may result in complications such as pneumonia. Around 2 out of 3 people develop symptoms after being infected with flu. These symptoms usually start suddenly, approximately one to two days after infection.

Typical symptoms include:

- ▶ high temperature (fever)
- ▶ dry cough
- ▶ bad headaches and aching limbs
- ▶ general sensation of being ill and tired

Every third person will not experience symptoms once they are infected.



There is increasing amounts of evidence to prove that flu increases the risk of cardiovascular complications. **According to studies, having a flu vaccine will help to protect against heart attacks and strokes.**

How can you become infected with a flu virus?



Flu viruses are mainly transmitted **by droplets when coughing, sneezing or talking**. If droplets that carry the flu virus come into contact with the mucous membranes of the nose, mouth or eyes, then you can become infected.



It is also possible to transmit flu viruses on **the hands or shared surfaces**, such as door handles.

You can still catch the flu even if you have had a flu vaccine.

Why is the flu vaccine recommended for medical practitioners?

Medical practitioners often come into close contact with lots of different people as part of their work. This increases their risk of catching flu viruses. **Being vaccinated against flu provides the best possible personal protection.**

In addition, medical practitioners often care for people who are at higher risk of experiencing severe or even life-threatening symptoms of flu. These vulnerable people include people aged 60 and over, people who are pregnant and people with certain underlying illnesses.

If medical practitioners are vaccinated against flu, this helps to reduce the spread of flu viruses in institutions. This means that the vaccine will not only protect your own health, but also that of any patients in your care.

Why do you have to be vaccinated against flu every year?

Flu viruses are constantly changing. The **vaccines are therefore adapted each year**. The vaccines contain ingredients of the different viral variants that are most frequently and most likely to be found over the coming season. Furthermore, protection from the vaccine only lasts for a limited time. For the best possible protection, you should be vaccinated every year.

When should you get vaccinated?

The best time to get the flu vaccine is **from October to mid-December**. This means you have enough time to build up sufficient protection before the seasonal flu epidemic begins. It can also be useful to be vaccinated at a later stage.



Free vaccination appointments may be offered at your place of work. Talk to the company medical staff about the flu vaccine.



It is also recommended that medical practitioners who have direct contact with patients are vaccinated against Covid-19 if they have not caught Covid-19 in the current year. **It is possible to be vaccinated against flu and Covid-19 at the same time.**

Is the flu vaccine safe?

The flu vaccine is **well tolerated and safe**. The vaccines that are given are known as inactivated vaccines. This means that the vaccines do not contain any active viruses and therefore cannot cause flu.

After being vaccinated, you may experience some of the usual reactions to having a vaccine, such as pain at the injection site, tiredness or a slight feeling of being ill. These symptoms usually go away after one or two days. Severe side effects are very rare.

How else can you help to protect yourself?

Having a flu vaccine means you will be well protected against severe symptoms of the illness. However, it does not offer complete protection. By following **simple hygiene measures**, you can protect both yourself and other people from flu viruses and other infectious respiratory diseases.

Important hygiene tips



Keep your distance



Pay attention to hygiene when coughing and sneezing



Thoroughly ventilate spaces on a regular basis



Wash your hands regularly as part of your everyday routine



Cover your mouth and nose with a mask if necessary



Avoid contact with others



Stay at home if you are unwell



Keep your hands away from your face

You can read more information about flu and how you can protect yourself at www.infektionsschutz.de and www.rki.de/influenza-impfung.

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Further information about the flu vaccine:

www.infektionsschutz.de/impfen/fuer-erwachsene/grippe-influenza

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