

What is the flu?

The flu is an illness caused by a group of viruses that can infect the lungs, throat and nose. It causes a wide range of symptoms that can be very severe including:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Body aches and chills
- Fatigue
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Flu vaccines are the best way to prevent severe illness. Get the vaccine each year to stay healthy and protected.

What flu vaccine should I get?

In Ontario there are two types of flu vaccines available:

1

Regular flu vaccines

For all ages.

Contains a standard dose that is enough to protect people under 65 years from severe flu infections.

2

Enhanced flu vaccines

For people aged 65+.

Made to give stronger protection than the regular flu vaccine by using a higher dose or a special ingredient that helps your immune system respond better.

Talk to your cardiologist about which vaccine option is best for you

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Respiratory Infections and Heart Health

Infections of the lungs and airway can put extra strain on your heart. This can lead to poor health outcomes, hospitalization, or even life-threatening complications like heart attack and stroke.

People with certain heart conditions are at a greater risk for these complications so it is important to stay up to date on seasonal respiratory vaccines like the flu and COVID-19 vaccines to protect yourself.

Who is at an increased risk for severe illness due to respiratory infections?

Having one or more of the following factors can increase your overall risk for severe flu and COVID-19 infections:

- ▶ People with chronic heart conditions
- ▶ Older adults (65+)
- ▶ People with weakened immune systems
- ▶ Adults living in congregate living settings (e.g., long-term care, nursing homes, assisted living)
- ▶ Infants and young children
- ▶ People who are pregnant



Protect yourself and your heart this respiratory season.

Heart disease can increase your risk for serious complications from the flu and COVID-19.

Learn how to stay protected.



Learn more

Find more about vaccines for heart patients:

- **HeartLife Foundation**
www.heartlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Vaccinations_HeartLife_EN.pdf
- **Heart and Stroke (COVID-19)**
www.heartandstroke.ca/articles/coronavirus-heart-disease-and-stroke
- **Heart and Stroke (Flu)** www.heartandstroke.ca/articles/why-you-need-a-flu-shot
- **Canadian Cardiovascular Society (COVID-19)** https://ccs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CCS_Vaccine_Info_May2021_v2.pdf

References

The information in this pamphlet comes from trusted medical sources. References are listed below.

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2. People who are at risk of more severe disease or outcomes from COVID-19. Government of Canada. Updated October 2, 2024. Accessed January 14, 2026. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/people-high-risk-for-severe-illness-covid-19.html>
3. Flu (seasonal influenza): Symptoms and treatment. Government of Canada. Updated January 9, 2026. Accessed January 14, 2026. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza.html>
4. Statement on seasonal influenza vaccines for 2025–2026. National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Updated April 30, 2025. Accessed January 14, 2026. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccines-2025-2026.html#a5.3>
5. Flu (seasonal influenza): Get your flu vaccine (flu shot). Government of Canada. Updated January 9, 2026. Accessed January 14, 2026. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/get-your-flu-shot.html>
6. COVID-19: Symptoms, treatment, what to do if you feel sick. Government of Canada. Updated February 11, 2025. Accessed January 14, 2026. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html>

Summary of NACI statement of January 10, 2025: Guidance on the use of COVID-19 vaccines for 2025 to summer 2026. Updated January 21, 2025. Accessed January 14, 2026. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-summary-guidance-covid-19-vaccines-2025-summer-2026.html>

Accessing respiratory vaccines in Ontario

Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are available for free at most pharmacies, walk-in clinics, or through your family doctor.

Talk to your cardiologist today about how you can protect yourself with respiratory vaccines.



What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 that mainly affects the lung and airway, but can also impact other parts of the body. It causes a wide range of symptoms including:

- Cough
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Sore throat
- Trouble breathing
- Congestion
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, chronic symptoms and life-threatening COVID-19 infections.

