

2018 In-school Flu Vaccine FAQs

What is FluMist?

FluMist is a nasal spray vaccine that helps prevent influenza (the flu). It is a fine mist that is sprayed into each side of the nose. You can breathe normally when getting it. There is no need to inhale or sniff.

Why is FluMist being offered again this year?

The FluMist manufacturer made changes to the vaccine and as a result, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices approved FluMist for use this flu season.

Is FluMist available at my doctor's office or at local drug stores?

FluMist and flu shots are available, and you can find them at doctor's offices and pharmacies.

Does FluMist contain any porcine products?

The FluMist (intranasal) vaccine has a very small amount of porcine gelatin, which is made from pork products and is used to stabilize vaccines so they remain effective. Porcine gelatin is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and is a medically safe ingredient used in some vaccines and medications.

Should I be worried that FluMist is a live vaccine?

No, live vaccines like FluMist are engineered to protect, not infect. Like vaccines for chicken pox and measles, FluMist contains weakened live virus strains. The virus strains are modified and cannot cause the flu. Instead, they help protect against influenza by causing an immune response in the nose – the place where flu usually starts.

Can my family or I get the flu from FluMist?

FluMist is a live vaccine specifically engineered to not make you sick. To date, there have been no reports of FluMist causing the flu.

Who gives flu vaccines to the children during the in-school vaccination clinics?

When the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) conducts in-school flu vaccination clinics, health department nurses along with other skilled nurses subcontracted from local vendors give the vaccinations.

What should my child expect on the day when the in-school flu vaccines are given?

Groups of children will be brought to the clinic area. KCHD employees will speak with each child to verify they have a completed vaccination consent form and feel well. Each child will then be directed to a nurse who will review the consent form, reassure the child if needed, and perform the vaccination. After the vaccination, the nurse will again assess the child to ensure they are feeling well before allowing the child to leave the vaccination area.

What happens if my child is worried or scared about getting the flu vaccination at the school clinic?

If your child is worried or anxious about getting the flu vaccination, we will make an effort to reassure them, and we will encourage but will not force a child who is clearly upset. In that case, we will give the child a note to take home indicating that they preferred not to get the flu vaccine at school.

How long is the Knox County Health Department on-site after the flu vaccines have been given?

We will remain on-site at the school for a minimum of 20 minutes after the last flu vaccine is given.

Why do some children end up getting a second dose of the flu vaccine?

If a child is younger than 9 years old and has not had at least two doses of flu vaccine in their lifetime, the CDC recommends they get a second dose at least 28 days after the first vaccination. The two doses provide maximum protection from the flu virus.

Are there preservatives (thimerosal) in the flu vaccines being given?

No, there are no preservatives or thimerosal (an organic mercury-based preservative) in the flu vaccines that will be given at the schools.

How do I get a record of my child's flu vaccination after it is given?

To get a copy of your child's flu vaccination record for yourself or for your pediatrician's office, you can visit www.knoxcounty.org/health/schoolflu and click on the medical records request link or call 865-215-5024 to speak with someone in Medical Records.