



FAQs on LAIV



We have received several queries about Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV). Specifically about children with Down Syndrome and about children living with someone who is immunosuppressed.

Which influenza vaccine should be given to children who have Down Syndrome?

Children who are in a medically at-risk group, including children with Down syndrome, should receive nasal Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine if they are aged 2-12 years (unless there is a contraindication).

Every effort should be made to explain to parents that LAIV vaccine is recommended because it is more effective than QIV in children. This is especially important in children who have an underlying medical condition to give them optimal protection from influenza.

Children aged 6 months to <2 years, and aged 13 years and older who are in a medically at-risk group, including children with Down syndrome, should receive Quadrivalent Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (QIV), given intramuscularly.

FAQs for healthcare professionals: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/faqchild.pdf>

Algorithms: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/algorithmflu.pdf>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/laivalgorithm.pdf>

Can children who are living with someone who is taking chemotherapy for cancer or is on immunomodulatory therapy receive LAIV?

Yes they can.

The advice about not giving the LAIV vaccine to children living with someone who is severely immunosuppressed, is only for children who are living with someone who is requiring isolation after a HSCT (haematopoietic stem cell/bone marrow transplant).

Anyone who has had a HSCT has to spend months in isolation while their immune system rebuilds. They have no immunity and there is a theoretical risk they could develop an infection from the LAIV vaccine.

There is no recommendation for children to avoid other vulnerable people including if they are living with a parent or sibling who is on chemotherapy or immunomodulatory therapy. Such children can receive LAIV.

This is a precautionary measure. Children who are vaccinated with LAIV can "shed" very small amounts of the weakened virus that is in the vaccine for a few days after vaccination. But the weakened viruses do not cause flu infection in others, or in the person vaccinated.

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee advises

"Millions of doses of LAIV have been administered in the US for over 10 years and serious illness amongst immunocompromised contacts inadvertently exposed to vaccine virus has never been observed"



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Immunisation Guidelines from the National immunisation Advisory Committee:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/chapter11.pdf>

FAQs: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/fagchild.pdf>

See below a link to some questions on vaccine safety that may come up from parents

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/flu-vaccine-for-children/flu vaccinegas.html>

Which children aged 2-12 years need one or two doses of LAIV?

The guidance on which children need one or two doses of LAIV comes from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee. It differs from the advice in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) of LAIV (Fluenz Tetra). It is also different from the advice for QIV.

Each chapter of the immunisation guidelines of the National Immunisation Advisory Committee. Advises:

In some circumstances, advice in these guidelines may differ from that in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) of the vaccines. When this occurs, the recommendations in these guidelines, which are based on current expert advice from NIAC, should be followed.

Healthy children aged 2-12 years

Children not in a medically at-risk group require one dose of LAIV.

Post marketing effectiveness studies have shown

- adequate efficacy after one dose of LAIV
- a second dose of LAIV is of little added benefit to healthy children

Children in a medically at-risk group aged 2-12 years

Children in a medically at risk group aged 2 to 8 years inclusive, who have not had any influenza vaccine before, require two doses of LAIV, 4 weeks apart.

Children in a medically at risk group aged 2 to 8 years inclusive, who have received one previous dose of any influenza vaccine, require one dose of LAIV.

Children in a medically at risk group aged 9 to 12 years inclusive, require one dose of LAIV regardless of their previous vaccination history.



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Protect yourself.
Protect others.

Group	Age	Previous vaccination	Dose
Medically at risk	2 to 8 years	Have never had any influenza vaccine	Two doses 4 weeks apart
		Have had any influenza vaccine before	One dose
	9 to 12 years	N/A	One dose
Healthy	2 to 12 years	N/A	One dose

Algorithms:

- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/algorithmflu.pdf>
- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/laivalgorithm.pdf>

FAQs for healthcare professionals: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/faqchild.pdf>