

Video transcript

Flu Vaccine and Cancer Treatment

Cancer Centre of
Southeastern Ontario

A Cancer Care Ontario Partner

Kingston Health
Sciences Centre

Centre des sciences de
la santé de Kingston

Hi, I'm Renee, nurse and patient educator at the Cancer Centre of Southeastern Ontario. People receiving cancer treatment often wonder if they can get the flu vaccine and when they should get it. This video will give you general information about the flu vaccine for people receiving cancer treatment.

Can I get the flu vaccine when I'm on cancer treatment?

Yes, it is safe to get the flu vaccine by injection. An injection is a shot given with a needle. The injected flu vaccine uses a dead virus. You should not get the nasal spray flu vaccine if you are receiving cancer treatment. The nasal spray is made from a live vaccine. A live vaccine contains a weakened living virus which can cause serious illness in people with a weakened immune system.

What is the best time to get the flu shot if I'm on cancer treatment?

If possible, the best time is before you start your cancer treatment. If you are currently receiving chemotherapy, the best time to get the flu shot is **48 hours before** or **48 hours after** treatment. This is when your blood counts are still near the normal range. If you're going to receive radiation, the best time to get the flu shot is before starting treatment. **If you have already started radiation treatment please wait until you have completed radiation to get your flu shot.**

Is there anyone who should not get the flu shot?

You should not get the flu shot if you are allergic to any of the vaccine components, if you have a very low platelet count, or if you're currently undergoing a stem-cell or bone marrow transplant. If you are on immunotherapy you should talk to your cancer care team before getting the flu shot.

Should my family and household members get the flu vaccine?

Yes, it is safe for family and household members to get the flu vaccine. If you have a weakened immune system the flu vaccine is recommended for family and household members. This will help reduce your exposure to the flu. Family and household members can safely get the nasal spray unless the person with cancer has recently had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant. If

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you have any questions or concerns you should talk to your cancer care team before getting any vaccinations.

If you would like more information visit our website at www.CancerCareSouthEast.ca

Contact us

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