

## Information on influenza vaccination for children born in 2019 and beyond

### Why is it important for children up to 5 years old to be vaccinated against influenza?

Prevention is essential. Influenza can be a major health problem in children up to 5 years of age, as it generates a high number of consultations in Primary Care Centres, as well as hospital admissions, some of them serious. **Of all children under 5 years of age who are admitted to hospital with serious illnesses, 68.4% and more than half of those admitted to intensive care units (ICU) had no known risk factors, that is, despite being healthy children, they were admitted to hospital for influenza.** Moreover, on average in recent years, it is estimated that there are three times more deaths annually from influenza than from serogroup B meningococcal disease in these children. **The vaccine is safe and effective.**

### Who should be vaccinated against influenza?

Influenza vaccination is recommended for all children from 6 months to 5 years of age. The administration of intranasal vaccine is recommended from the age of 24 months, so the vaccine will be administered in schools for children attending the 1st and 2nd Cycle of Infant Education.

### Which children can NOT be vaccinated against influenza with the intranasal vaccine?

The intranasal vaccine is contraindicated in children with any of the following conditions:

- **Severe allergy (anaphylaxis) to egg or egg proteins.**
- **Severe immune system deficiency due to congenital or medical treatment.**
- **Chronic treatment with salicylates (oral or cream).**
- **Asthma symptoms in the 3 days prior to vaccination.**

In these children the vaccine to be administered, at their health centre or usual vaccination post, will be the intramuscular one.

Nor should the intranasal vaccine be administered to contacts of immunocompromised patients or patients with low defences (e.g. bone marrow transplant recipients requiring isolation), who cannot be without contact with them in the 1-2 weeks following vaccination. However, it is especially important to vaccinate these children to prevent transmission to their immunocompromised contact and they should go to the health centre to receive the intramuscular (jab) flu vaccine.

### What is the risk of this vaccine?

**The intranasal attenuated influenza vaccine is a very safe vaccine** that has been administered for years in other countries; in fact, many countries have extensive experience in the use of this vaccine in school campaigns, being the third campaign in the Region of Murcia without problems.

The most frequent adverse reaction is nasal congestion, although decreased appetite or malaise are also very frequent. In case of fever or malaise, the treatment to be administered is paracetamol.

### Why is influenza vaccination to be carried out in schools?

Accessibility is one of the most important aspects of any vaccination programme. It is not always easy to go to a health centre or vaccination post in the morning to vaccinate children.

There is extensive experience in countries around us in the use of this vaccine in school campaigns. In the Region of Murcia this vaccination has already been carried out in the 2023-2024 school year with successful results. The intranasal attenuated vaccine is a safe vaccine with a painless route of administration that makes it ideal for the implementation of a school programme.

### Where can I get more information?

At your Health Care Centre, at your usual Vaccination Post or by calling the Vaccination Programme telephone numbers: 968 362249, 968 366811, as well as by e-mail: [vacunas@carm.es](mailto:vacunas@carm.es).

**If you have any questions regarding the flu vaccination campaign for children up to 5 years of age, please find out more at [https://www.murciasalud.es/web/vacunacion/-/vacunacionescolar\\_gripe](https://www.murciasalud.es/web/vacunacion/-/vacunacionescolar_gripe).**