

# Do You Need an Influenza Vaccine?

## Influenza

Influenza (flu) is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It affects your nose, throat and lungs. Influenza can be mild to severe and it spreads easily.

The flu can be dangerous for people who have trouble:

- with how well their muscles or lungs work
- coughing, swallowing or clearing fluids from their airways.

These problems are common among people who had a stroke, spinal cord injury or other conditions in acute rehabilitation.

## Influenza Vaccine

Your rehabilitation provider wants you to get the flu vaccine. Members of your care circle (family members and friends) should also get the vaccine.

The vaccine can:

- reduce illness, doctor visits and missed work and school
- prevent flu-related hospital stays and death.

Each year the vaccine helps protect against the flu viruses that are believed to be the most common.

It does not cover all varieties of the flu because the viruses are always changing.

## When to Call 911

Call 911 right away if you are have any of these symptoms:

- trouble breathing
- shortness of breath
- pain or pressure in your chest or abdomen (belly)
- dizziness, confusion or unable to wake up easily
- seizures
- unable to urinate
- severe muscle pain
- severe weakness or unsteadiness
- fever higher than 100.5 F
- cough that gets better but returns or gets worse
- any chronic (long-term) health condition that gets worse.