

# 2010-2011 Influenza Vaccines

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## What are the risks from the inactivated influenza vaccine?

Like any medicine, a vaccine could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The potential risks are small and may be discussed with your physician. Serious problems from inactivated influenza vaccine are very rare. The viruses in inactivated influenza vaccine have been killed, so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine.

### Mild problems:

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Hoarseness; sore, red or itchy eyes; cough
- Fever or aches

If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days.

### Severe problems:

- Life-threatening allergic reactions from vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it is usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot.
- In very rare instances, inactivated influenza (swine flu) vaccine was associated with Guillain-Barré Syndrome. Contact your doctor immediately or call 911.

### Why get vaccinated?

Influenza is a contagious disease which can be spread by coughing sneezing or nasal secretions. Anyone can be infected but children are the most likely sources. For most people, symptoms last only a few days and can include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches and fatigue. By getting vaccinated, you can protect yourself from influenza and may also avoid spreading influenza to others.

### How can I learn more?

- Ask your health care provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO) or visit CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### Health Information Audio Library

available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at: 877-217-7946

Health and Wellness web site: [www.humana-military.com](http://www.humana-military.com)

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# Heart Failure Disease Management Newsletter

winter 2011

## Stubborn Cholesterol



You've been trying to diet and exercise to bring your cholesterol to healthy levels – but your doctor's tests keeps showing cholesterol levels that are too high. If you have an inherited tendency toward high cholesterol, and diet and exercise aren't enough to make the numbers improve, your health care team will most likely recommend drug therapy. Various medications lower blood cholesterol levels. They may be prescribed

individually or in combination with other drugs. Your doctor will determine the best drug or combination for you. But remember: drugs alone will not be the answer to your high cholesterol. You will still need to keep up your healthy diet and exercise routine to attain healthy cholesterol numbers.

There are several different types of drugs available to help lower your cholesterol. Arming yourself with information about the most common ones will prepare you for a good discussion with your doctor.

### Statins (also known as HMG CoA reductase inhibitors)

- **How it works.** One of the first class of drugs considered is statins. These block an enzyme in your liver required to make cholesterol. As a result, your liver makes less cholesterol and picks up LDL "bad" cholesterol from your bloodstream. Lipitor (Atorvastatin), Mevacor (Lovastatin), Zocor (Simvastatin) and Crestor (Rosuvastatin) are statins.
- **Other effects.** Statins have a modest effect on lowering triglycerides (blood fats) and raising HDL (good) cholesterol.
- **Side effects.** Most patients experience mild side effects (upset stomach, abdominal pain, gas, cramps, constipation, muscle soreness, pain and weakness) that go away as your body adjusts, but in rare instances patients experience muscle problems and liver abnormalities.
- **How taken.** The statins are usually given in a single dose at the evening meal or at bedtime. It is important these medications are taken in the evening to take advantage of the fact the body makes more cholesterol at night than during the day.

### Cholesterol absorption inhibitors

- **How it works.** This relatively new class of cholesterol-lowering medications works by preventing your body

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## Cold HEART Facts

If you have heart disease and run out in the cold weather to shovel snow, you could experience chest pain or discomfort called angina pectoris (AN'jih-nah PEK'tor-is). Extreme weather conditions can make physical activity more strenuous. Individually, either strenuous exercise or extreme weather can increase blood pressure, push the heart rate up, and increase blood concentration of fibrinogen, a protein involved in blood clotting. Combining the two factors of extra laborious movement and the extreme weather contribute to increased risk of a heart attack.

If you must shovel snow yourself or engage in any cold weather activity, consider these tips:

**Keep warm** by wearing layers of clothing, which will trap air between layers, forming a protective insulation. Keep your head and your ears warm by wearing a hat or head scarf (your ears are especially prone to frostbite). Keep your hands and feet warm too.

**Don't drink alcoholic beverages** before going out as this will give you an initial feeling of warmth, because blood

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## Stubborn Cholesterol

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from absorbing and storing cholesterol in your liver and improving the way cholesterol is cleared from your blood. Zetia (Ezetimibe) is a cholesterol absorption inhibitor.

- **Other effects.** Like statins, selective cholesterol absorption inhibitors are most effective at lowering the LDL (bad) cholesterol, but may also have modest effects on lowering triglycerides (blood fats) and raising HDL (good) cholesterol.
- **Side effects.** Some side effects including headache, diarrhea, dizziness, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, joint and muscle pain.
- **How taken.** This medication comes in one dosage and it is usually combined with one of the statin medications.

### Resins / Bile Acid Sequestrants

- **How it works.** Bile acid sequestrants bind with cholesterol-containing bile acids (used in the digestion process) in the intestines and are then eliminated in the stool.
- **Other effects.** The usual effect of bile acid sequestrants is to lower LDL-cholesterol by about 10 to 20 percent. Small doses of sequestrants can produce useful reductions in LDL-cholesterol. Bile acid sequestrants are sometimes prescribed with a statin for patients with heart disease to increase cholesterol reduction. When these two drugs are combined, their effects added together can lower LDL-cholesterol by over 40 percent.
- **Side effects.** The most common side effects are stomach or intestinal problems: constipation, abdominal pain or cramping, bloating, gas, heartburn, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
- **How taken.** Cholestyramine is only available as granules (a coarse powder), while colestipol is available as both granules or tablets. They are usually taken once or twice a day with meals. Questran granules or Colestid granules must be mixed with liquids – do not take the powder dry. You can mix the granules with water, milk, a flavored drink, juice, soda or foods such as cereals, thin soups, yogurt, pudding, cottage cheese or fruit cocktail.

### Fibrates (Fibric Acid Derivatives)

- **How it works.** These medications break down triglycerides and are used to treat very high triglyceride levels. Lopid (Gemfibrozil) is a Fibrate.

- **Other effects.** Fibrates are primarily used for lowering triglycerides and sometimes to increase HDL (good cholesterol) levels. They are not effective in lowering LDL (bad) cholesterol. The reductions in triglycerides generally are in the range of 20 to 50 percent with increases in HDL-cholesterol of 10 to 15 percent.
- **Side effects.** Patient may experience upset stomach or diarrhea, increased risk of gallstones, increased effect of blood-thinning medications or anemia.
- **How taken.** Fibrates are occasionally used in combination with other cholesterol lowering drugs and are usually given in two daily doses 30 minutes before the morning and evening meals.



### Niacin (nicotinic acid)

- **How it works.** Niacin works by slowing the liver's production of the chemicals that help make LDL "bad" cholesterol. Niacin is prescribed to lower triglycerides and LDL cholesterol and raise HDL ("good") cholesterol.
- **Other effects.** It significantly raises HDL "good" cholesterol.
- **Side effects.** Niacin side effects may include flushing, itching and stomach upset. Your liver functions may be closely monitored, as niacin can cause toxicity. It is used cautiously in diabetic patients as it can raise blood sugar levels.
- **How taken.** It comes in prescription form and as "dietary supplements" which should not be used as a substitute for prescription niacin because of potential serious side effects. Dietary supplement niacin is not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the same way that prescription niacin is. It may contain widely variable amounts of niacin —from none to much more than the label states. The amount of niacin may even vary from lot to lot of the same brand. Consult your doctor before starting any niacin therapy.

Stubborn cholesterol may need some assistance to bring it under control, but it is an important step in taking care of your heart. Teaming with your thoughtful diet planning, prescription cholesterol medicine may be just what the doctor ordered; bringing you the results you've been working towards.

Sources: American Heart Association, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, and The Heart and Stroke Foundation

## Cold HEART Facts

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vessels in the skin expand. Heat is then drawn away from the body's vital organs.

Take time to do a few minutes of **warm-up activity** like walking to increase your heart rate slowly.

Plan **frequent breaks** from the cold weather activities so your body doesn't become too strained. You don't have to clear your entire driveway all at one time.

Don't shovel or attempt other vigorous activity **immediately after eating a meal.** The "work" of digestion on top of the physical activity could put too much strain on your heart.

Know the signs of a heart attack and be careful to **listen to your body.** At the first sign of discomfort, shortness of breath, dizziness or nausea – pause; relax for a few minutes to see if you can catch your breath. If not seek medical attention immediately.

See if your community offers programs or **assistance for snow shoveling** or snow removal. Your heart condition may qualify you for this free assistance and remove your risk of a heart attack.

Sources: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and American Heart Association

The Who, What, Why and How of the

## 2010-2011 Influenza Vaccines

### Who should and who should not get an influenza vaccine?

**Should:** All people 6 months of age and older should get the vaccine, but it is especially important for people at higher risk of severe influenza and their close contacts, including health care personnel and close contacts of children younger than 6 months. If you received the 2009 H1N1 (pandemic) influenza vaccine, you should still get the 2010-2011 seasonal influenza vaccine. Your doctor can advise you regarding your need for an influenza vaccine.

### Should not:

- People with severe egg allergy
- People with severe allergy to any vaccine component
- People who have a severe reaction after a dose of influenza vaccine
- People who have ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (severe paralytic illness, also called GBS)
- People who are moderately or severely ill should wait until they recover before getting the flu vaccine

### What are the vaccine choices?

- Inactivated (killed) vaccine, or the "flu shot" is given by injection into the muscle.
- Live, attenuated (weakened) influenza vaccine is sprayed into the nostrils.

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## Caribbean Casserole

This tropical-inspired dish is gently spiced for a rich flavor.

### Prep time:

10 minutes

### Cook time:

10 minutes

### Yields:

10 servings

### Serving Size:

1 C casserole

### Ingredients

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ green bell pepper, rinsed and diced
- 1 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 can (14½ oz) stewed tomatoes
- 1 can (15½ oz) low-sodium black beans (or beans of your choice), drained and rinsed
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1½ C instant brown rice, uncooked

### Directions

1. Sauté onion and green pepper in canola oil, in a large pan, until tender. Do not brown.
2. Add tomatoes and beans (including liquid from both), as well as oregano and garlic powder. Bring to a boil.
3. Stir in rice and cover. Reduce heat to simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

*Tip:* Finish the meal with delicious tropical fruit, such as mangoes, papayas, or pineapple.

*Note:* If you can't find beans labeled "low-sodium," compare the Nutrition Facts panels to find the beans with the lowest amount of sodium. Rinsing can help further reduce the sodium level.

### Nutrition Information Per Serving

calories: 185	total fiber: 7 g
total fat: 1 g	protein: 7 g
saturated fat: 0 g	carbohydrates: 37 g
cholesterol: 0 mg	potassium: 292 mg
sodium: 297 mg	

Source: National Heart Lung and Blood Institute