

Only the German version is authoritative. This serves as a translation aid!

Influenza is anything but a trivial illness. Seasonal influenza waves cause between one and seven million additional physician consultations in Germany each year, and significantly more in years with strong influenza waves (source: RKI). Although influenza vaccination does not always prevent infection, it offers the most effective protection - especially against complications.

Vaccination should be given every year, since the duration of the protective effect probably lasts only one season, and the vaccine composition is adjusted annually.

The WHO announces the composition for the northern hemisphere annually already in February/March. The vaccine for the southern hemisphere is determined in September.

Vaccination is done with a quadrivalent influenza vaccine - as recommended by the STIKO since 2018.

The influenza vaccine for the Northern Hemisphere for the 2023/2024 season is composed of antigens from globally circulating variants of the following viruses, as recommended by WHO:

#### **EGG-BASED INFLUENZA VACCINES**

- An A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Darwin/9/2021 (H3N2)-like virus; and
- a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus; and
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF STIKO**

For occupational indications, the Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) recommends annual influenza vaccination for the following occupational groups (Epidemiological Bulletin 4/2023):

- Persons at increased risk, e.g., medical personnel.
- Persons in facilities with extensive public traffic and persons who may act as a possible source of infection for at-risk persons in their care
- Persons with increased risk due to direct contact with poultry and wild birds.

An influenza vaccination is recommended as standard for persons 60 years of age and older. The protective vaccination guidelines of STIKO continue to recommend inactivated quadrivalent high-dose vaccines for persons  $\geq 60$  years of age. If employees over 60 years of

age choose to receive the high-dose vaccine, they should contact their primary care physician's office to do so.

#### FLU VACCINATION: BEST POSSIBLE PROTECTION THROUGH WINTER

"However, the fact that the Standing Commission on Vaccination (STIKO) recommends influenza vaccination only for certain groups of people does not mean that the STIKO advises against influenza vaccination for other people..." - see also the FAQ of the RKI.

The more people are vaccinated, the less likely the flu viruses are to spread; thus we protect ourselves and others.

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