

“Who Should Not Be Vaccinated”

There are some people who should not be vaccinated without first consulting a physician. These include:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination
- People who have developed **Guillain-Barre’ syndrome (GBS)** within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine. (click on “GBS” on the right of your screen for more information)
- Children less than 6 months of age (influenza vaccine is not approved for this age group)
- People who have a moderate to severe illness with a fever (they should wait until they recover to get vaccinated).

Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)

What is GBS?

Guillain-Barré (pronounced *ghee-YAN bah-RAY*) syndrome is a disease in which the body damages its own nerve cells (outside of the brain and spinal cord), resulting in muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis. GBS can last for weeks to months. Most people eventually recover completely or nearly completely, but some people have permanent nerve damage and between 5% and 6% of people who develop GBS die. GBS affects people of both sexes and all ages, and has been reported in all races.

What causes GBS?

It is thought that GBS may be triggered by an infection. The infection that most commonly precedes GBS is caused by a bacterium called *Campylobacter jejuni*. Other respiratory or intestinal illnesses and other triggers may also precede an episode of GBS. In 1976, vaccination with the swine flu vaccine was associated with getting GBS. Several studies have been done to evaluate if other flu vaccines since 1976 were associated with GBS. Only one of the studies showed an association. That study suggested that one person out of 1 million vaccinated persons may be at risk of GBS associated with the vaccine.