

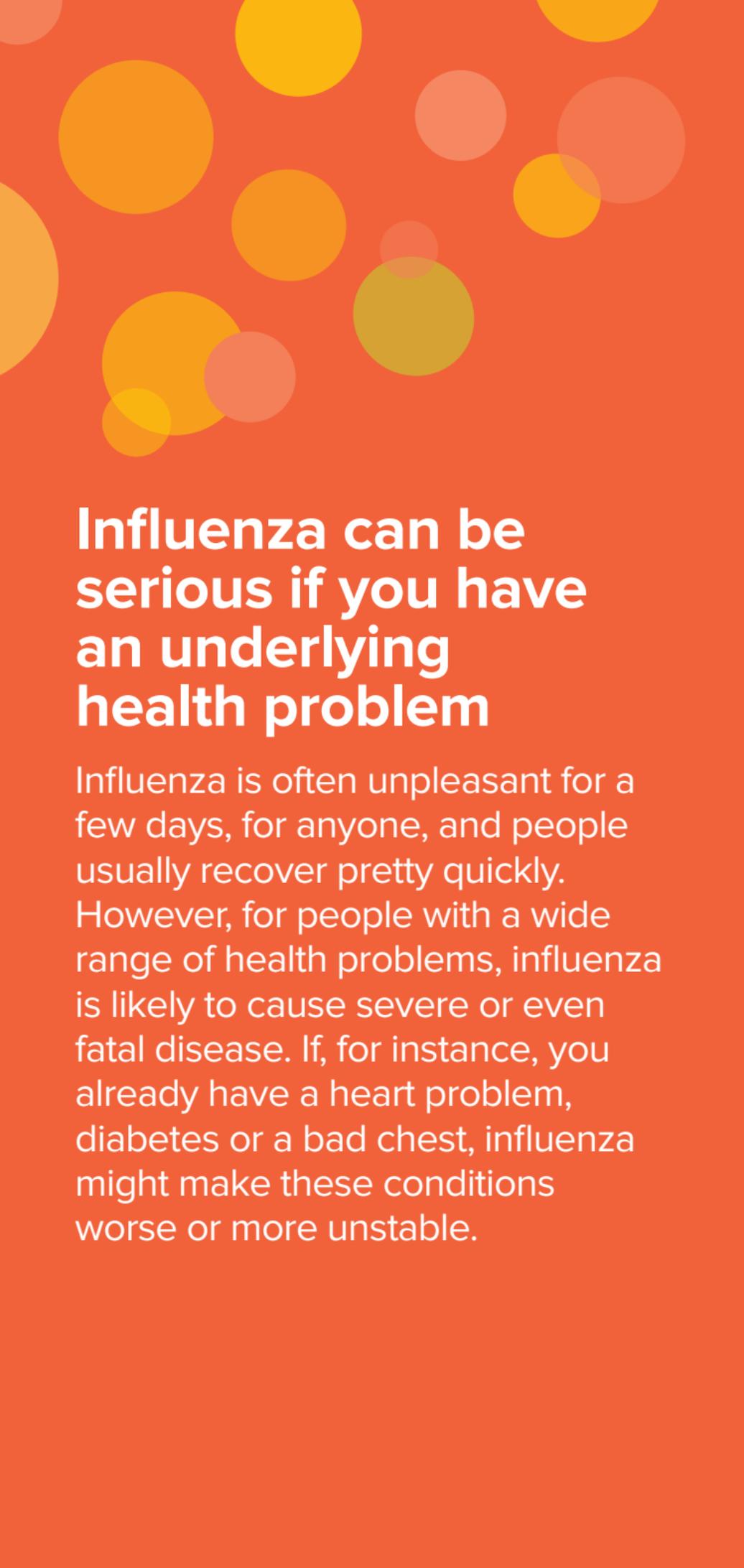
**Get vaccinated
against influenza
this winter if you
have an underlying
health problem**



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

Europe



Influenza can be serious if you have an underlying health problem

Influenza is often unpleasant for a few days, for anyone, and people usually recover pretty quickly. However, for people with a wide range of health problems, influenza is likely to cause severe or even fatal disease. If, for instance, you already have a heart problem, diabetes or a bad chest, influenza might make these conditions worse or more unstable.

Why do some health problems increase your risk for influenza?

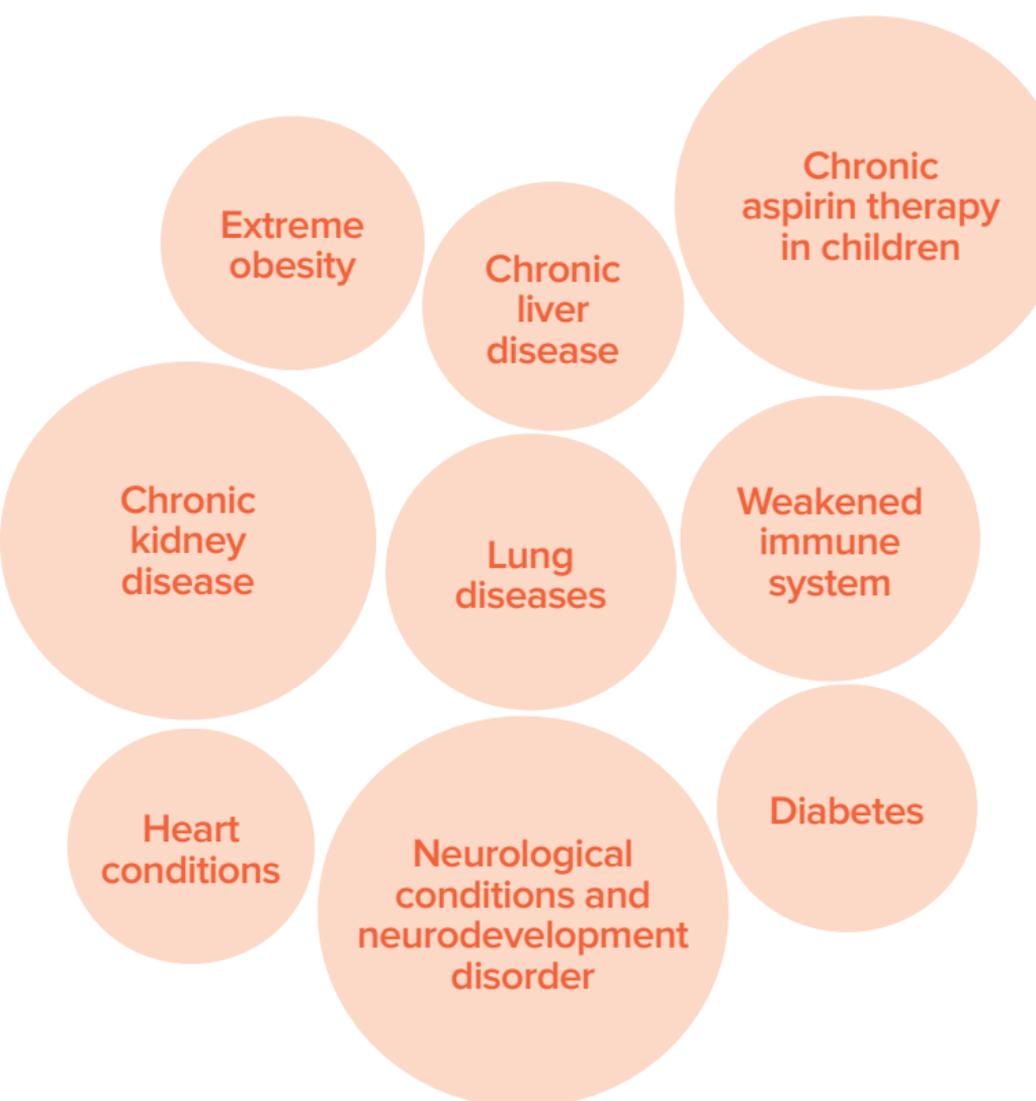
People with underlying health problems are more likely to have a weakened immune system, due either to the illness itself (e.g. HIV infection, diabetes) or to its treatment (e.g. steroids, chemotherapy). This makes it harder to fight influenza infection and increases the risk for complications, such as pneumonia.

What is influenza?

Influenza is an infectious disease that spreads from person to person mainly by coughing, sneezing and by close contact. Influenza epidemics usually occur in winter.

Influenza symptoms begin suddenly (sometimes in just a few hours) and can last from a few days to several weeks. Common symptoms include fever and chills, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle pain and tiredness.

Which underlying health conditions increase your risk for influenza?



What is the best protection against influenza?

Getting vaccinated every year before the influenza season starts is the best way to:

Reduce the risks for severe disease, hospitalization and death

Reduce the risk for getting influenza

If you are pregnant and have an underlying health problem, getting vaccinated is doubly important — for you and your baby.

Is influenza vaccination safe?

It is safe to get vaccinated. Any side-effects of influenza vaccination are usually mild and include soreness and redness at the injection site. Some people experience headache, muscle pain, fever, tiredness and nausea. These side-effects are mild and pass quickly, unlike influenza.