

# Alana's Story

As extraordinary as the outcome, Alana's story is relatively unremarkable in detail.

On the afternoon of February 1, 2003, 5 1/2 year-old Alana Yaksich spent the day with her parents and brothers watching movies, eating sundaes and playing. Alana enjoyed the afternoon feeling healthy and surrounded by her friends and family.

Later that evening, Alana developed a 106-degree fever and was rushed to the emergency room. Within hours of her arrival at the local hospital, Alana died of flu-related complications that caused swelling and injury to her brain.

Alana had not been vaccinated against the flu. At the time, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention only recommended children 6 months - 23 months receive a yearly flu vaccination. Since 2010, everyone 6 months and older is recommended to receive an annual flu vaccination.

In 2009, Alana's family established Alana's Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to educating people about the severity of influenza and the importance of vaccinating children against the flu every year so no family has to experience the tragedy of losing someone to a vaccine preventable disease.

## Flu Resources

World Health Organization  
<https://www.who.int/health-topics/influenza-seasonal>

US Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services  
[www.michigan.gov/flu](http://www.michigan.gov/flu)

Influenza Key Facts  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm)

Flu Near You  
<https://flunearyou.org>

## Grief Support Resources

**NATIONAL**  
Centering Corporation  
[www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)

GriefNet  
[www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)

Grief Watch  
[www.griefwatch.com](http://www.griefwatch.com)

The Compassionate Friends  
[www.compassionatefriends.com](http://www.compassionatefriends.com)

The Dougy Center  
[www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)

**MICHIGAN**  
Angela Hospice  
[www.angelahospice.org](http://www.angelahospice.org)

Dawn Farm  
[www.dawnfarm.org](http://www.dawnfarm.org)

Ele's Place  
[www.elesplace.org](http://www.elesplace.org)

New Hope  
[www.newhopecenter.net](http://www.newhopecenter.net)



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[www.alanasfoundation.org](http://www.alanasfoundation.org)

Alana's Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit



[www.alanasfoundation.org](http://www.alanasfoundation.org)

[info@alanasfoundation.org](mailto:info@alanasfoundation.org)

[FaceBook.com/AlanasFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/AlanasFoundation)

[Instagram.com/AlanasFoundation](https://www.instagram.com/AlanasFoundation)



*"We never knew the flu could kill until we lost Alana"*

— Zachary Yaksich  
Alana's dad

## Who We Are & What We Do:

Alana's Foundation was started in 2009 by Alana's family in her memory. We provide influenza education and awareness with a focus on offering convenient and affordable flu vaccination options. In addition, we serve as a resource for family support that may include referrals for grief counseling, short term financial support or connecting with other families that have experienced a similar loss.

*Alana's Foundation is 100% volunteer run relying solely on donations from private individuals and businesses. Your support enables us to increase public awareness about the dangers of influenza and directly affect the lives of those who may otherwise not be able to afford influenza immunization while being a resource for grieving families.*

## Our Mission:

To educate the public about the importance of yearly influenza vaccinations and in doing so, increase vaccination rates by providing convenient and affordable flu vaccination options as well as provide support for families that have lost a child.



2015 Outstanding Flu Season Activities - Honorable Mention College Flu Vaccination Challenge



2012 AIM Outstanding Achievement Award (Alliance for Immunization in Michigan)

## Resources We Provide

- Flu vaccination opportunities for schools and other community locations
- Community outreach - flu education & awareness through public speaking opportunities
- Vaccine assistance grants for those that serve uninsured/underinsured populations
- Financial support or referrals for:
  - Grief counseling/support groups
  - Individual and family therapy
- Financial support or referrals for:
  - Household maintenance and repair services
  - Car maintenance and repair
  - Grocery delivery and/or food preparation
- Connect with other families who have experienced similar loss

## How to Help

- Make a donation
  - Monetary
  - Time and Talent (Professional Services - PR, Marketing, Social Media, etc; Trade Services - roofers, plumbers, electricians, painters, etc.)
- Host a 3rd party fundraising event
- Invite us to speak
- Display our literature
- Schedule a clinic
- Volunteer to assist us with events, fundraisers, clinics



# Flu Symptoms

The flu is different from a cold. It usually comes on suddenly and may include these “flu-like” symptoms:

- Fever (usually high)
- Dry cough
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Extreme tiredness
- Muscle or body aches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, can also occur but are more common in children than adults



## Emergency Warning Signs

In children:

- High & prolonged fever—102°+ (in children <12 weeks, any fever)
- Fast or trouble breathing
- Bluish lips, face or skin color
- Dehydration, (no urine for 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears when crying)
- Changes in mental condition, such as not waking up, or interacting, or moodiness such that the child doesn't want to be held, or refuses to walk
- Seizures
- Fever or cough that improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions (i.e. heart or lung disease, diabetes)

In adults:

- High or prolonged fever
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Near fainting or fainting
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

*If you or your child presents any of these signs, please seek medical attention right away.*

[www.AlanasFoundation.org](http://www.AlanasFoundation.org)

# Key Influenza Vaccine Facts

*The single best way to prevent flu is to get a flu vaccination each year.*

## Types of Vaccines

- *The “flu shot”*: an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle. It is approved for healthy people older than 6 months, including pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions.
- *The nasal-spray flu vaccine*: a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for “live attenuated influenza vaccine”.) It is approved for healthy people 2 – 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

## When to Get Vaccinated

October or November is the best time, but you can still get vaccinated anytime during Flu season (October - May).

## Who Should Get Vaccinated

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends:

*All people 6 months and older get a flu vaccine each year.*

*People at high risk for complications from the flu including:*

- Children aged 6 months and older
- Pregnant women
- People 50+ years of age
- Anyone with certain chronic medical conditions
- People living in nursing homes or other long term care facilities

*People living with or caring for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:*

- Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu (see above)
- Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age
- Healthcare workers

## Who Should Not Get Vaccinated

The following should first consult with a physician before being vaccinated:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past
- People who developed Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine previously
- Children less than 6 months of age (influenza vaccine not approved for this age group)
- People with a fever should wait to get vaccinated until their symptoms lessen.