

Protect Yourself from the Flu

The most effective way to help prevent the spread of the flu is for everyone to be vaccinated annually.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there were at least 26 million illnesses, 290,000 hospitalizations, and 19,000 deaths from flu—including 154 pediatric flu deaths.¹ The CDC also states that people who were vaccinated against flu were about 40% to 70% less likely to be hospitalized because of flu illness or related complications.² The flu shot is recommended for everyone six months and older.

FIVE REASONS TO GET THE FLU SHOT

- 1 What you touch can hurt you.** The flu virus can spread a day before a person has symptoms and up to a week after becoming sick. While commonly spread when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes around others, the flu virus can also be transferred through contact with contaminated surfaces such as phones, desks or door handles.³
- 2 You may not have symptoms, but others might.** Twenty to thirty percent of people who carry the influenza virus never experience flu-like symptoms, but they can still pass the virus to others, who might not be so lucky.⁴
- 3 The flu shot does not cause the flu.** It takes two weeks for the antibodies that protect you against the flu to develop in the body; therefore, during those two weeks, you could still get the flu.⁵
- 4 It can save lives in more ways than one.** The flu shot protects against the potentially deadly virus, but a study also found that adults were six times more likely to suffer a heart attack the week after being diagnosed with the flu.⁶
- 5 You need a flu shot every year.** The flu virus changes every year, and a person's immune protection from a vaccine declines over time. Getting vaccinated each year helps make sure you have immunity to the strains most likely to cause an outbreak.⁴

What to Know About 2023-2024 Flu Season



While September and October remain the best months for most to get vaccinated, this year, **early vaccination in July and August should be considered for the following groups:**

- ✔ Adults (65+ years old) and pregnant people in the first and second trimester **ONLY IF** vaccination is not possible in September or October.
- ✔ Pregnant people in their third trimester to protect their babies from the flu after birth when they are too young to get vaccinated.
- ✔ Children who need two doses of flu vaccine should get their first dose of vaccine as soon as it is available. The second dose should be given at least four weeks later.
- ✔ Children who have health care visits during July and August if there might not be another opportunity to vaccinate them.



There will be an updated influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 component in flu vaccines.



The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted that people with an egg-allergy may receive any flu vaccine (egg- or non-egg based) as long as it is appropriate for their age and health status. No additional safety measures are necessary.



For more information about the flu or the vaccine, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.

1. Insights on Influenza, May 30, 023, <https://www.familiesfightingflu.org/flu-season-2022-2023-in-review>
2. 2023-2024 CDC Flu Vaccination Recommendations Adopted, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/2022-2023/flu-vaccination-recommendations-adopted.htm>
3. How Flu Spreads, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/spread.htm#>
4. Harvard Health Publishing (2020). 10 Flu Myths. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/10-flu-myths>
5. Seasonal Flu Vaccines; CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/flu-shot.htm#>
6. AARP (2022) 4 Surprising Benefits of the Flu Shot <https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2022/flu-shot-benefits.html>