

The Flu - What You Need to Know

*Everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated each year **before the end of October** for the best protection against influenza (flu).*

Visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a vaccine provider near you!

What are the dangers of the flu?

- Healthy children and adults can still get severe influenza.
- Some people are at higher risk for severe illness from flu. That includes adults over 65, pregnant people, infants, and those with existing medical conditions.
- Every year in the U.S., flu results in **millions of illnesses**. This causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations. It also causes **tens of thousands of deaths**.

Why should you get a flu vaccine?

- Getting an annual flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk of getting the flu. It also reduces your risk of any severe side effects of the flu.
- Some people who get a flu vaccine may still get sick. But, the vaccine **reduces the severity** of illness, hospitalizations, and flu-related death.

Are there any specifics based on age?

Children 6 months to 8 years:

- If children under 9 have never received a flu vaccine or only received it once in their lives, they should get two doses. These should be given at least four weeks apart.

Adults 65 or older:

- The CDC recommends adults 65 and older receive a higher dose or adjuvanted influenza vaccine. If those are not available, any vaccine is better than none.

Is the flu vaccine safe for people with an egg allergy?

- Starting this year, the CDC recommends that **it is safe for people with egg allergy** to get any flu vaccine as long as it is otherwise appropriate for their age and health status.
- The vaccines contain a small amount of egg proteins. Studies have shown that severe allergic reactions to this amount of egg are unlikely.
- It is safe for people with egg allergies to get any of the flu vaccines.

Who should NOT get a flu vaccine?

- The CDC recommends annual vaccination for all people 6 months and older. The exception is people who have a contraindication to influenza vaccination, like a history of severe allergic reactions (e.g., anaphylaxis). This could be to any component of the vaccine (other than egg). It could also be due to a previous dose of any influenza vaccine.
- There are more contradictions for the FluMist Quadrivalent option. Talk with your healthcare provider if you are interested in FluMist.

What else do I need to know?

- It is recommended to get the flu vaccine and updated COVID-19 vaccine **at the same time.**
- All flu vaccines for the 2023-2024 year are quadrivalent. This means that they are designed to protect against four different flu viruses. They include two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses.
- Flu season usually runs from **October to April.** While it's best to get the flu vaccine by the end of October, vaccination any time in the flu season is better than no protection.

Questions? Talk to your healthcare provider, pharmacist, or community health center.

Don't Forget About COVID and RSV Vaccines too!

#KeepCOHealthy

Sources

- <https://vaccinateyourfamily.org/vaccines-diseases/current-flu-season/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm#effectiveness>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/summary/summary-recommendations.htm>

