

# 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>

