

FLU SEASON FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is it important to get a flu shot this year?


This year, more than any other year, it is very important for everyone to get a flu shot. What we do not need is a flu epidemic on top of a COVID-19 pandemic. Because a lot of the symptoms are similar, getting a flu shot will help doctors better assess a person's condition if they know they have received the flu vaccine.

When does flu season begin?

According to the CDC, flu season begins in October each year and runs through May, with activity generally peaking between December and February.

What are the flu symptoms?

Flu symptoms include:

	Fever or chills		Muscle or body aches
	Cough		Headaches
	Sore throat		Fatigue
	Runny or stuffy nose		

Where can I get a flu vaccine?

Consult with your primary care physician about getting a flu vaccine during your next visit. It is important to remember that it takes approximately two weeks for the flu vaccination to begin protecting you from the virus.

Memorial Hermann **primary care** and **pediatric clinics** have flu vaccines available for patients today.

Patients who are at higher risk of developing complications from the flu – including adults 65 years and older, children younger than 2 years old*, pregnant women and those with other underlying health conditions – are strongly encouraged to get their flu shot early (in September) before activity picks up in October.



What are good flu prevention tips?

While the precautions we are currently taking to stop the spread of COVID-19 – including wearing masks, social distancing and regular hand hygiene – will also help stop the spread of the flu, it is still very important that everyone get a flu shot this year.

I've heard getting a flu shot will give me the flu, is that true?

Memorial Hermann is providing inactivated flu vaccines, meaning they do not contain live virus; this means the vaccine will not give you the virus. If someone develops symptoms after getting a vaccine, it can be for a number of reasons: (1) it is the body developing the immune response, (2) rarely, a person can have an allergic reaction, or (3) because the immune response takes two weeks to be fully activated, it is possible that someone could have been exposed and develop the flu prior to the immune response being fully developed.

Will the flu vaccine protect me from getting COVID-19?

The flu shot will **NOT** act as a vaccine for COVID-19. There is also no evidence that receiving a flu shot will make you more susceptible to contracting COVID-19. However, this year, more than any other year, it's extremely important that everyone get a flu shot.

Who should get a flu shot?

*Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu shot every year. Very young children may need two shots because they receive a reduced dose each time.

Adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, people with cancer, diabetes and others with compromised immune systems are at high risk of contracting the flu. The flu can make chronic conditions, such as congestive heart failure or asthma, much worse.