A Strong Defense Against Flu: **Get Vaccinated!**

FIGHT FLU

The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against influenza (flu) is to get a flu vaccine every flu season. Flu is a contagious respiratory disease that can lead to serious illness, hospitalization, or even death. CDC recommends everyone six months and older get an annual flu vaccine.

What are some key reasons to get a flu vaccine?

- Every year, flu vaccination prevents illnesses, medical visits, hospitalizations, and deaths.
- Flu vaccination also is an important preventive tool for people with chronic health conditions. For example flu vaccination has been associated with lower rates of some cardiac events among in people with heart disease.
- Vaccinating pregnant women helps protect them from flu illness and hospitalization, and also has been shown to help protect the baby from flu infection for several months after birth, before the baby can be vaccinated.
- A 2017 study showed that flu vaccine can be life-saving in children.
- While some people who get vaccinated still get sick, flu vaccination has been shown in several studies to reduce severity of illness.



Why is it important to get a flu vaccine EVERY year?

- Flu viruses are constantly changing, so flu vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the viruses that research suggests will be common during the upcoming flu season.
- Your protection from a flu vaccine declines over time. Yearly vaccination is needed for the best protection.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

What kinds of flu vaccines are recommended?

There are several licensed and recommended flu vaccine options this season:

- Standard dose flu shots made from virus grown in eggs.
- Shots made with adjuvant and high dose for older adults.
- Shots made with virus grown in cell culture instead of eggs.
- Shots made using a recombinant vaccine production technology that does not require the use of a flu virus.
- Live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV, the nasal spray vaccine), which is made with live, weakened influenza viruses. It is an option for people 2 through 49 years of age who are not pregnant.



Is the flu vaccine safe?

Flu vaccines have a good safety record. Hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines over the past 50 years. Extensive research supports the safety of seasonal flu vaccines. Each year, CDC works with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other partners to ensure the highest safety standards for flu vaccines. More information about the safety of flu vaccines is available at www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/vaccinesafety.htm.

What are the side effects of flu vaccines?

Flu shots: Flu shots are made using killed flu viruses (for inactivated vaccines), or without flu virus at all (for the recombinant vaccine). So, you cannot get flu from a flu shot. Some minor side effects that may occur include soreness, redness and/or swelling where the shot was given, low grade fever, and aches.

Nasal spray flu vaccines: The viruses in nasal spray flu vaccines are weakened and do not cause the severe symptoms often associated with influenza illness. For adults, side effects from the nasal spray may include runny nose, headache, sore throat, and cough. For children, side effects may also include wheezing, vomiting, muscle aches, and fever.

If these problems occur, they are usually mild and go away on their own, but serious reactions are also possible. Almost all people who receive flu vaccine have no serious problems from it.

When and Where to get vaccinated?

You should get a flu vaccine by the end of October. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating, vaccination should continue throughout flu season, even in January or later.

Flu vaccines are offered in many doctors' offices and clinics. Flu vaccine is available in many other locations, including health departments, pharmacies, urgent care clinics, health centers, and travel clinics. Vaccines may also be offered at your school, college health center, or workplace. Visit: www.vaccinefinder.org at to find a flu vaccination clinic near you.

For more information, visit: **www.cdc.gov/flu** or call **1-800-CDC-INFO**

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