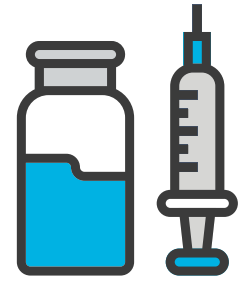


# Key Facts About Flu Vaccine



## Why should people get vaccinated against the flu?

Every year, millions of people get hit by the flu, leading to hospitalization, and sadly, even death. And the worst part is, every flu season is different, so you never know what to expect. You could be out of commission for just a few days, or it could take a serious toll on your health. Complications like pneumonia, ear infections, and sinus infections can wreak havoc on your body and even worsen chronic medical conditions like asthma or diabetes.

But here's the good news: there's a simple and effective way to protect yourself. Getting an annual flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk of getting the flu and its dangerous complications. Not only does vaccination help prevent illness, hospitalizations, and deaths related to the flu, but it also reduces the severity of illness in those who do get sick. So, roll up your sleeves and give your immune system the boost it needs to stay healthy this flu season!

## How do flu vaccines work?

Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against flu illness.

Seasonal flu vaccines are carefully designed to target the most common influenza viruses of the upcoming season. That's right. You're getting a customized shield against the flu! And in the US, all flu vaccines are quadrivalent, which means they protect against four different flu viruses, including influenza A(H1N1), A(H3N2), and two types of influenza B viruses.

## Who should be vaccinated?

Everyone 6 months and older in the United States should get an influenza (flu) vaccine every season with rare exceptions. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has made this "universal" recommendation since the 2010-2011 flu season.

Some people are at a higher risk of developing serious complications from the flu, and vaccination can help protect them.

So, who are these high-risk groups? Well, they include young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease. For these folks, the flu can be particularly dangerous and potentially life-threatening.

## **Who should not be vaccinated?**

Different influenza vaccines are approved for use in people in different age groups. In addition, some vaccines are not recommended for certain groups of people. Factors that can determine a person's suitability for vaccination, or vaccination with a particular vaccine, include a person's age, health (current and past) and any allergies to flu vaccine or its components. If you have questions about whether the flu shot is right for you, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider.

## **When should I get vaccinated?**

September, October, and November are generally good times to be vaccinated against flu. But you can benefit from the vaccine even if you don't get it until after the flu season starts. While influenza viruses spread year-round, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February.

## **Why do I need a flu vaccine every year?**

A flu vaccine is needed every year for two reasons.

Firstly, our immune system's protection from previous vaccinations gradually declines over time, so it's important to get a fresh dose each year to keep our defenses strong. And secondly, flu viruses are always evolving, so the composition of flu vaccines is updated annually to protect against the strains that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season.

It may seem like a hassle to get vaccinated every year, but trust us, it's worth it! By staying up-to-date with your flu shots, you're ensuring the best possible protection against the flu.

## **Does the flu vaccine work right away?**

Unfortunately, it doesn't provide instant protection. It typically takes about two weeks after getting vaccinated for the antibodies to develop in your body and provide defense against the influenza virus.

It's recommended that you get your flu shot before flu season starts so that your body has time to build up that immunity. That way, you'll be fully armed and ready to fight off any flu viruses that come your way.

## **What kind of protection does the flu vaccine offer?**

How well the flu vaccine protects you from the flu can vary. The standard flu vaccine is generally more effective among people younger than 65. Some older people and people with certain medical conditions may develop less immunity after receiving a flu shot.

High-dose flu vaccines are a type of vaccine approved for people aged 65 and older. They can help people in this group have a more robust immune system response against flu viruses.

Reviews of past studies have found that the flu vaccine is about 50% effective for healthy adults between 18 and 64 years old. The vaccine may sometimes be less effective.

Even when the vaccine doesn't completely prevent the flu, it may lessen the severity of your illness. It also may lower the risk of serious complications and severe illness needing hospital stays.