

FLU SHOTS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is seasonal influenza (flu)?

Seasonal influenza, commonly called “the flu,” is caused by influenza viruses, which infect the respiratory tract (e.g., the nose, throat, lungs). The flu, unlike the common cold, comes on suddenly and can be mild to severe and potentially lead to death.

How does someone get the flu?

The flu is spread person to person mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. Less often, the flu can be picked up from touching surfaces where these droplets have landed - other people touch these droplets then touch their eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

When is a person with the flu contagious?

Typically healthy adults may be able to infect other people beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick.

When do symptoms usually begin?

Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

- Dry cough
- Fever over 101 degrees Fahrenheit in adults, and often as high as 103 to 105 degrees Fahrenheit in children
- Chills and sweats
- Headache
- Sore throat and trouble swallowing
- Muscle aches and pains, especially in your back, arms and legs
- Fatigue and weakness
- Nasal congestion
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhea and vomiting

What is the flu shot?

The flu shot guards against the most common strains of flu each season. Scientists update the serum annually to offer better protection against the constantly changing viruses. The vaccine is an injection of serum given to a person by needle.

When should I get the flu vaccine to have the most protection?

“Flu season” in the United States can begin as early as October and last as late as May but generally peaks between December and February. Given that the vaccine takes about two weeks to take effect, you should plan to receive the vaccine in late September through October.

Is there more than one type of flu shot available?

Yes. There are several types of flu vaccines. This clinic offers the standard and high dose quadrivalent vaccines.

- The standard quadrivalent flu vaccine can help prevent the flu caused by four different types of viruses, including influenza A and B, for people who are six months of age or older.
- If you're 65 years old or older, you may receive a high-dose quadrivalent flu vaccine that provides more protection than standard-dose flu vaccines, thanks to four times the amount of antigens that help boost your immune system.

Does flu vaccine work right away?

No. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against influenza virus infection.

Can I get the flu even though I got a flu vaccine this year?

Yes. There is still a possibility you could get the flu even if you got vaccinated. If you get sick the flu vaccine has been shown to reduce severity of your illness and reduce the risk of hospitalization.

Can the flu vaccine give me the flu?

No. A flu vaccine cannot cause flu illness. Flu vaccines are viruses that have been inactivated and are therefore not infectious, or with no flu vaccine viruses at all (which is the case for recombinant influenza vaccine).

Are there any side effects from the flu vaccine?

Minor side effects associated with getting the flu vaccine that can occur:

- Soreness, redness or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever (low grade)
- Aches

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention