

BENEFITS OF GETTING A FLU SHOT

There are many **benefits** when you get the seasonal flu shot:

- It keeps you from becoming sick with the flu
- It reduces your risk for going to the hospital
- It protects you and your baby if you're pregnant
- If you still get the flu, you won't get as sick as those who didn't get the flu shot
- It helps protect the people around you like babies, young children, older adults and those individuals with chronic conditions
- It reduces the risk for cardiac events and hospitalizations for those who have chronic conditions

WHO SHOULD GET THE FLU SHOT?

The flu shot is for everyone over age 6 months, with **rare exceptions**. It's especially important for individuals who are at high risk of developing serious complications from the flu including adults 65 and older and adults with chronic conditions, among other **groups**.

WHAT DOES THE VACCINE (FLU SHOT) LOOK LIKE THIS YEAR?

In the United States, flu season occurs in the fall and winter. This year, new flu vaccines were developed for the upcoming flu season - the vaccines were updated with the most recent strains of flu. Because of this yearly update, it's important to get this season's flu shot. Your healthcare provider will administer the specific vaccine you should get based on your health status and age.

WHY SHOULD I GET IT?

Getting a flu shot is an effective way to decrease your chance of becoming ill with, being hospitalized for and dying from the flu. Getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever during the 2020-21 flu season to protect yourself and the people around you from flu, and to help reduce the stress on the healthcare systems responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The flu shot isn't perfect but it **does work**. During seasons when the flu vaccine viruses are similar to circulating flu viruses, flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of having to go to the doctor with flu by 40 percent to 60 percent.

WHERE SHOULD I GET IT?

It's best to go to your doctor to get your flu shot. Your doctor has your health history and will be prepared to give you the vaccine that's right for your age and health status. All doctors have safeguards in place to reduce your risk for coming in contact with the coronavirus (COVID-19). Contact them ahead of time and find out what steps to take to schedule your shot.

Historically, many of us receive our flu shot at the workplace or other community clinics, however, these options may not be available this year due to the pandemic. If you don't have a primary care doctor or want to go somewhere more convenient, visit the **VaccineFinder**.

Many health insurance plans cover the flu shot but it's possible you may have a fee or a copay. Be prepared and double check with your doctor (or vaccine provider) and insurance carrier ahead of time to find out whether you have to pay and if you do, how much it will cost.

WHEN SHOULD I GET IT?

Flu season can peak anytime between **October and May**. It's recommended you get a flu shot in September or October, by the end of October. If you miss getting yours in September or October, it's wise to still get vaccinated, even in January or later.

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE 2020-21 SEASON

When you get a flu shot you protect yourself and the people around you from the flu and you help reduce strain on our healthcare system - this is especially important now since our healthcare system is focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The flu and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) and flu is caused by infection with **influenza viruses**.

- Because the flu viruses and the COVID-19 virus are different germs, the flu shot does not protect you from the coronavirus, but it does protect you from this year's flu virus strains.
- And likewise, if a COVID-19 vaccine comes available, it will not protect you from flu viruses.
- Some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone, and testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis. Flu and COVID-19 share many characteristics, but there are some key differences between the two. Learn more about the similarities and differences **here**.

If you feel sick the day of your scheduled visit, call your healthcare provider ahead of time to determine whether you should reschedule or go ahead with getting your shot that day.