

Despite Pandemic, Don't Ignore Your Flu Shot

Despite the current pandemic, the flu season will begin in the fall as usual – and with COVID-19 continuing to make headlines, some may question the necessity (or even the wisdom) of receiving a flu shot this year. But according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **it is highly important that individuals get their flu vaccination this year.**

The best time to get a flu shot is September or October, but even January is not too late if the flu is still circulating. The flu vaccine will not prevent COVID-19 but has many benefits, such as reducing the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and long-term complications.

Both the coronavirus and influenza viruses will likely be spreading this winter and it is possible to have both at the same time, so being vaccinated for the flu can reduce the overall effect of respiratory illness while protecting vulnerable populations. Additionally, because having to deal with two widespread viruses could severely limit the amount of health care resources available to doctors and hospital staffs, the flu vaccine can be critical in the conservation of much-needed medical supplies.

The flu vaccine is recommended for most people over six months of age, though not if you are already sick with the flu or COVID-19 (or if you are allergic to the vaccine). If you have questions about the influenza vaccine or are unsure if it is safe for you to receive it, contact your family doctor.



Are You a Flu Shot VIP?

Getting a flu shot is especially important for people in the following categories.

Essential workers. This includes health care personnel and others unable to work from home.

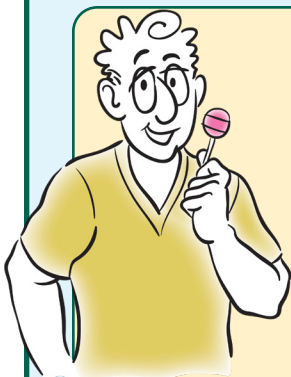
People over age 65. These individuals are at a higher risk of contracting the flu and other respiratory illnesses.

Nursing home residents. Illness and viruses spread faster in places with many people, so residents are more at risk.

Underlying medical conditions. Those with cancer and other diseases could struggle more with the flu.

Pregnant women. The flu vaccine can help protect women during and after pregnancy.

Young children. Studies show that the flu vaccine can be lifesaving in children beginning at six months of age.



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention