

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

SHOULD I GET AN INFLUENZA VACCINATION?

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Diana Dedmon, Assistant Professor, UT Health Science Center

Soghra Jarvandi, Associate Professor

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Influenza (flu) is a contagious virus that spreads throughout the United States each year between October and May. The exact timing of the flu varies somewhat in each region of the United States. While anyone can get the flu, the severity of the disease can be quite different. Flu is more dangerous for adults over 65 years of age, pregnant women or people with weakened immune systems. Complications from the flu can include bacterial infections of the lungs and worsening of existing medical conditions, such as diabetes. A flu vaccine is the best protection against the flu and its potentially serious complications.

Flu and COVID-19

The flu and COVID-19 are both contagious upper respiratory illnesses, but different viruses cause them. Since the two viruses may present with similar symptoms, it is crucial to be tested to determine what virus is causing your symptoms. It is also possible to have both viruses at the same time.

Since fewer COVID-19 restrictions are in place, such as mask mandates, it is estimated the flu will be more widespread in the 2021-2022 fall/winter season.



Flu Vaccine

It is recommended that people 6 months of age and older get a flu vaccine annually. Each year the flu vaccine changes a bit to account for the flu virus that scientists predict to circulate that particular year.

For the 2021-2022 flu season, several types of flu vaccines are available. Based on your age and health condition, specific types of flu vaccines are appropriate for you.

In rare cases, people should not receive a flu vaccine.

Please let your provider know if you have had a reaction to the flu vaccine in the past or if you have had Guillain-Barre Syndrome.



SHOULD I GET AN INFLUENZA VACCINATION?

It would be best if you did not wait to be vaccinated against the flu. September and October are generally ideal times to get vaccinated, but definitely schedule your vaccine before the end of October. After being vaccinated against the flu, it usually takes your body about two weeks to develop antibody protection.

Side Effects of the Flu Vaccine

Common side effects of the flu vaccine are:

- Soreness or redness at the injection site
- Mild fever
- Muscle aches
- Headache



Where Can I Get a Flu Vaccine?

You can find flu vaccines in local pharmacies, clinics or your local health department.

Can a Flu Vaccine be Given with Other Vaccinations?

The flu vaccine may be given with other vaccinations. If a person is mildly ill, it is still all right to proceed with a flu vaccination, but if a person is severely ill or suspects they may have COVID-19, they should wait until they recover before getting the flu vaccination.

It is always wise to speak with a trusted healthcare provider if you have questions about vaccinations.

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Visit the CDC website for more information on flu vaccine: www.cdc.gov/flu



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