

SET A DATE TO VACCINATE



Influenza—or ‘the flu’—is a highly contagious respiratory illness that causes symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, fatigue and headaches. The flu is caused by viruses, and its severity varies each season based on a variety of factors including when and how much vaccine is available. Influenza can lead to complications such as pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic conditions including asthma and diabetes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season.

HOW DOES THE FLU VACCINE WORK?

Exposure to the flu virus stimulates the body’s immune response, producing protective antibodies that protect against influenza virus infection. Because the viruses that cause influenza are always changing, it is important to be immunized against the current strains of influenza every year. There are two options for flu vaccine.

1. Flu shot: inactivated vaccine that is given with a needle, typically in the arm, to people 6 months of age and older
2. Nasal spray: live flu viruses (that do not cause the flu) intended for healthy individuals between the ages of 2 and 49 who are not pregnant

WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED?

While most individuals should receive a flu vaccine each flu season, the CDC reports that it is especially important for the following groups to get vaccinated because they are at high risk for serious flu-related complications or are in close contact with those at high risk for developing complications.

- Children younger than 5, especially children younger than 2
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long term care facilities
- Household contacts of persons at high risk for flu complications
- Household contacts and caregivers of children less than 6 months of age
- Health care workers

Additionally, the CDC reports that the following groups should not receive a flu vaccine without consulting a physician.

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past
- People who have developed Guillain-Barre Syndrome within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccination previously
- Children younger than 6 months of age
- People who have a moderate or severe illness with a fever should wait to be vaccinated until their symptoms lessen.

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

In addition to getting the flu vaccine each year, wash your hands frequently, avoid exposure to people who have the flu, and do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth to prevent the spread of germs. If you do come down with the flu this winter, get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

Consult your physician to determine whether to receive a flu vaccine.



There are nearly 66 MILLION cases of the common cold in the United States every year.

The flu virus, or influenza, is even more widespread—108 million cases are reported annually. Fortunately, there are ways to prevent the spread of germs that cause colds and flu in the first place. Follow the tips below so those invisible, but nevertheless nasty, cold and flu germs won't get a chance to remind you of their presence this winter.

- ★ Wash your hands frequently.
- ★ Avoid exposure to people who have a cold or the flu.
- ★ Do not touch your eyes or nose after coming into contact with someone who is sick.
- ★ Always use a facial tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- ★ One of the best ways to prevent flu is to receive a flu shot each year.

Hay casi 66 millones casos del resfriado común en los Estados Unidos cada año.

La gripe, o influenza, está todavía más extendida—108 millones casos están reportados cada año. Afortunadamente, hay maneras de prevenir la propagación de las bacterias que causan el resfriado y la gripe en el primer lugar. Siga los consejos abajo para que estas bacterias invisibles, pero sin embargo desagradables, del resfriado y la gripe nunca tengan la oportunidad de recordarle a usted de su presencia este invierno.

- ★ Lávese las manos frecuentemente.
- ★ Evite exposición a las personas que tienen un resfriado o la gripe.
- ★ Nunca toque los ojos o nariz después de tener contacto con alguien que está enferma.
- ★ Siempre use un pañuelo de papel cuando estornudar o toser.
- ★ Una de las mejores maneras de prevenir la gripe es recibir una inyección antigripal cada año.

For more information, contact Pam Coleman, Employer Relations Manager, at (803) 395-2527.

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