Flu Vaccine 2018-2019

Frequently Asked Questions

Vaccination has been recommended for decades as the best way to protect yourself against flu. The shot’s effectiveness varies from year to year, depending on the closeness of the match between that season’s viruses and the vaccine, which is usually reformulated each year. An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk of getting sick with seasonal flu and spreading it to others.

Can a flu shot give you the flu?

No, a flu shot cannot cause flu illness. Flu vaccines given with a needle are currently made in two ways: the vaccine is made either with a) flu vaccine viruses that have been ‘inactivated’ and are therefore not infectious, or b) with no flu vaccine viruses at all (which is the case for recombinant influenza vaccine).

While a flu vaccine cannot give you flu illness, there are different side effects that may be associated with getting a flu shot or a nasal spray flu vaccine. These side effects are mild and short-lasting, especially when compared to symptoms of a bad case of the flu.

Can I get a flu vaccine if I am allergic to eggs?

The recommendations for people with egg allergies are the same as last season:

- People who have experienced only hives after exposure to egg can get any licensed flu vaccine that is otherwise appropriate for their age and health.
- People who have symptoms other than hives after exposure to eggs, such as angioedema, respiratory distress, lightheadedness, or recurrent emesis; or who have needed epinephrine or another emergency medical intervention, can also get any license flu vaccine that is otherwise appropriate for their age and health, but the vaccine should be given in a medical setting and be supervised by a health care provider who is able to recognize and manage severe allergic conditions. (Settings include hospitals, clinics, health departments, and physician offices). People with egg allergies no longer have to wait 30 minutes after receiving their vaccine.

How do flu vaccines work?

Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against infection with the viruses that are in the vaccine.

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the influenza viruses that research indicates will be the most common during the upcoming season. Traditional flu vaccines (called “trivalent” vaccines) are made to protect three flu viruses: an influenza A (H1N1) virus, an influenza A (H3N2) virus, and an influenza B virus. There are also flu vaccines made to protect against four flu viruses (called “quadrivalent” vaccines). These vaccines protect against the same viruses as the trivalent vaccine and an additional B virus.
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What kinds of flu vaccines are available?

CDC recommends use of injectable influenza vaccines (including inactivated influenza vaccines and recombinant influenza vaccines) during 2018-2019. Both trivalent and quadrivalent flu vaccines will be available. The nasal spray is approved for use in non-pregnant individuals, 2 years through 49 years of age.

There is also high-dose trivalent shot for people 65 and older.

For specific information on which viruses will the 2018-2019 flu vaccines protect against, please visit www.cdc.gov/flu

Who should get vaccinated this season?

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every season. Vaccination to prevent influenza is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. See People at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications for a full list of age and health factors that confer increased risk.

More information is available at Who Should Get Vaccinated Against Influenza.

When should I get vaccinated?

It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect against flu. CDC recommends that people get a flu vaccine by the end of October, if possible. Getting vaccinated later, however, can still be beneficial and vaccination should continue to be offered throughout the flu season, even into January or later.

Why do I need a flu shot every year?

A flu vaccine is needed every season for two reasons. First, the body's immune response from vaccination declines over time, so an annual vaccine is needed for optimal protection. Second, because flu viruses are constantly changing, the formulation of the flu vaccine is reviewed each year and sometimes updated to keep up with changing flu viruses. For the best protection, everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated annually.

What should I do if I get sick with flu?

Most people with flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, in most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.

If, however, you have symptoms of flu and are at high risk of flu complications, or are very sick or concerned about your illness, contact your health care provider. There are drugs your doctor may prescribe for treating flu called antivirals. These drugs can make you better faster and may also prevent serious complications.

Source: www.cdc.gov/flu