



SALUS GROUP

Preparing for the 2024–25 Flu Season

Experts predict that the United States may have another early start to the influenza (flu) season this year. When colder weather arrives, flu rates typically increase, peaking between December and February.

This article previews the 2024-25 flu season and provides information about this year's flu vaccine.

The 2024-25 Flu Season

Since the introduction of COVID-19, the timing and duration of flu virus activity have remained unpredictable. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported early increases in seasonal flu last year. During a six-month period last fall and winter, these infections caused over 800,000 hospitalizations. Furthermore, the Southern Hemisphere (including countries in South America and Africa) experienced an earlier start of flu activity this year, which may indicate what's to come in the United States.

In addition, health experts anticipate another wave of respiratory viral infections this fall, including the flu, the virus that causes COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Fortunately, vaccines for all three viruses will be available this fall. While the flu and COVID-19 vaccines are intended for the general public, the RSV vaccines are recommended only for qualifying individuals, such as older adults and some pregnant people.

Because of the unusual trend in the last flu season, CDC officials recommend that people get vaccinated by the end of October to fight the spread of the flu virus and serious illnesses caused by infection. The CDC reported that people vaccinated against the flu last season were about 40%-70% less likely to be hospitalized because of the flu illness or related complications.

Flu Vaccine FAQ

What Are the CDC's Recommendations for Getting a Flu Vaccine for the 2024-25 Flu Season?

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months or older, with rare exceptions, get a flu vaccine. For those 65 years or older, the agency also recommends using higher-dose flu vaccines or adjuvanted flu vaccines over standard-dose unadjuvanted flu vaccines. However, if one of the preferentially recommended flu vaccines for people 65 and older is unavailable at the time of administration, the agency recommends that people in this age group get a standard-dose flu vaccine instead.

When Should I Get a Flu Vaccine?

The recommendation for the timing of receiving the 2024-25 flu vaccine is similar to last season. Most people only need one dose for the season, with September or October being the best times to get vaccinated.

Some children who have not received two or more flu vaccines or are receiving their first flu vaccines may be recommended to receive two doses. Children who need two doses of flu vaccine should get their first dose as soon as the vaccine becomes available. The second dose should be given at least four weeks after the first.

The CDC states it's ideal for everyone to be vaccinated by the end of October, but vaccination after October can still provide protection during the peak of flu season. The best time for you to be vaccinated may depend on certain factors, such as age or if you're pregnant.

What Viruses Will the 2024-25 Vaccines Protect Against?

There are several flu variants, and they can change and morph as the flu season progresses. The vaccines are created each flu season to combat the flu viruses that research indicates will be the most common.

Updated 2024-25 flu vaccines are trivalent and guard against three virus subtypes: A(H1N1), A(H3N2) and a Victoria lineage influenza B virus. The composition of this season's vaccine compared to last has been updated with a new influenza A(H3N2) virus.

While you may still catch the flu if you receive a vaccine, immunization has been proven to reduce the severity of illness. The type of vaccine an individual needs depends on age and risk level. Speak to a doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional if you have questions about which flu shot is best for you.

What If I Have Egg Allergies?

Typically, flu vaccines are produced using an egg-based manufacturing process and contain a small amount of egg proteins. Previously, the CDC recommended that those with egg-related allergies get their vaccine under the supervision of a health care provider who can recognize and manage severe allergic reactions. However, per the CDC, that precaution is no longer necessary.

According to the CDC, "Egg allergy alone necessitates no additional safety measures for influenza vaccination beyond those recommended for any recipient of any vaccine, regardless of the severity of previous reaction to egg."

Can I Receive Multiple Vaccines at the Same Time?

Multiple vaccines are available to Americans to protect against respiratory viruses, including the flu, the virus that causes COVID-19, and RSV. Similar to how the flu vaccine is updated, COVID-19 booster shots are revised annually to target the most recent and common strains. The CDC says that it's safe to get the flu and COVID-19 shots at the same time.

What Are the CDC's Recommendations for Getting an RSV Vaccine?

Most people recover in a week or two, but RSV can be a serious risk for infants and older adults; they are more likely to develop severe RSV and need hospitalization. Vaccines are available to protect infants and young children, pregnant people and older adults from severe RSV. Currently, the CDC recommends only a single dose (not an annual shot) of [RSV vaccine](#) for all adults ages 75 and older and for adults ages 60-74 with increased risk of severe RSV disease. There are two options for protecting infants against RSV: a maternal vaccine for the pregnant person and preventive antibodies given to the baby. Only one of these options is needed for most babies to be protected. The CDC recommends a single dose of RSV vaccine for pregnant people from weeks 32-36 of pregnancy for the prevention of RSV disease in infants under 6 months of age. For most of the United States, it is recommended that this vaccine is given from September through January.

Summary

During this flu season, vaccination and other preventive measures can help minimize the risk of the flu for you and those around you. Other ways to stay healthy include staying home if you are sick, washing your hands frequently and maintaining a healthy diet.

Contact your physician with any questions regarding flu vaccination, and [check out more information](#) about flu season from the CDC.

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