



# Fighting the flu one shot at a time

**Influenza (flu) viruses can cause you or a loved one to get sick. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting the vaccine every year.**

**See below for some quick answers to commonly asked flu questions.**

## **Is the flu dangerous?**

Most people who get the flu get better within two weeks, but some people may be hospitalized from complications like:<sup>1</sup>

- Pneumonia
- Inflammation of the heart, brain or muscle
- Sepsis
- Increased asthma attacks or worsening of COPD
- Multi-organ failure

Young children, older adults, pregnant women and people with chronic conditions have a higher chance of these complications.

## **Why should I get the flu vaccine?**

Getting your flu shot is the best way to lower your chance of getting sick from the flu or getting others sick.<sup>2</sup> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone, six months and older, get a flu shot every year. Hundreds of millions of people have received the flu vaccine over the past 50 years. And many studies show that it works, it's safe and may help:

- Reduce the risk of doctor visits for the flu by 40-60%<sup>3</sup>
- Lower the risk of hospitalizations for people with diabetes or chronic illnesses<sup>3</sup>
- Lessen the chance of having a heart problem in people with heart disease<sup>3</sup>

## **Can I get the flu from the vaccine?**

No, the vaccine is made from inactive or weakened versions of the virus that cannot cause illness. These are used to teach your body to recognize the flu virus and for your immune system to build protection against it. Your doctor or pharmacist can help guide you to the right vaccine based on age and other medical conditions.

## **Are there side effects to the vaccine?**

Most side effects go away within a couple of days and can include headache, fever, nausea or muscle aches.<sup>2</sup>

## **How can I get the vaccine?**

Call us to learn more and find a local vaccine location.

**Contact the number on  
your member ID card  
or call 1-833-570-6670 (TTY: 711).**

## Can I still get the flu, even if I got the vaccine?

You can still get the flu, but with the vaccine, your immune system is ready to fight the virus before it can grow stronger. Without the vaccine, it can take your body longer to fight the flu and allows the virus to grow stronger.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes there are other reasons why people may get sick after getting the flu vaccine, including:<sup>5</sup>

- Other respiratory flu-like illnesses
- Exposure to the flu before the two weeks needed for your body to build up immune protection
- Contracting a different strain of the flu than the one used for your vaccine
- Your body's inability to build up a strong enough response to the vaccine

If you become hospitalized with flu, but received the vaccine, you are 59% less likely to be admitted to the ICU compared to not getting the vaccine.<sup>5</sup>

## What else can I do to protect myself and others from the flu?

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting the flu shot every year. It's also important to take daily preventative steps to stop the flu from spreading. You can:

- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid going out when you're sick

If you have a fever, the CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

**Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the flu vaccine. Or call us for answers to your questions, contact us at the number on your member ID card.**

## References

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Flu (Influenza). HHS.gov Immunization. September 8, 2021. HHS.gov Immunization. Available at: <https://www.hhs.gov/immunization/diseases/flu/index.html>. Accessed December 10, 2021.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Flu and Older Adults. National Institute on Aging. Last reviewed December 1, 2021. Available at: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/flu-and-older-adults>. Accessed December 10, 2021.
- <sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Key Facts About Seasonal Flu Vaccine. Influenza (Flu). Last reviewed November 18, 2021. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm>. Accessed December 10, 2021.
- <sup>4</sup> Yvette C. Terrie, BSP Pharm, RPh. Pharmacy Times. Offer the Facts on Adverse Effects of the Influenza Vaccine. Last updated January 31, 2020. Volume 86, Issue 1. Available at: <https://www.pharmacytimes.com/view/offer-the-facts-on-adverse-effects-of-the-influenza-vaccine>. Accessed December 10, 2021.
- <sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Misconceptions about Seasonal Flu and Flu Vaccines. Influenza (Flu). Last reviewed November 18, 2021. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/misconceptions.htm>. Accessed December 10, 2021.