What Is "the Flu"?

Update for Flu season 2022-2023



The flu is a type of germ (called a virus). It can get into the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu is also called influenza (in-floo-EN-zuh). Many people who get the flu recover well, yet it can cause severe illness and even death for people who are high-risk. Getting a flu shot can not only protect you but also help you limit the spread of the virus to other people.

How do I know if I have the flu?

If you have the flu, you may have:

- sudden fever
- muscle aches
- chills
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- headache
- red or itchy eyes
- dry cough



You may also feel tired or weak.



What is the flu vaccine?

There are different types of flu viruses and they are always changing. They are grouped as Flu A and Flu B strains. Vaccines are designed to target both types in one dose.

The flu vaccine can protect you against flu germs. There are two types:

- The flu "shot", which is given in the arm. ***The flu shot is made using dead viruses so it cannot make you sick with the flu.***
- The nasal spray, which you breathe in through your nose. It is made using inactivated virus and does not give you the flu. The nasal spray can be given only to healthy people who are between the ages of 2 and 49 years.

If you are allergic to eggs, speak to your healthcare provider before getting a flu vaccine.

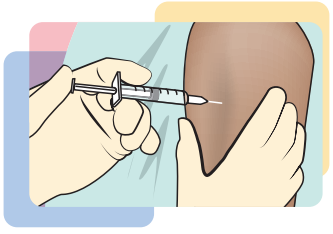
Who should receive a flu vaccine?

Flu can be serious. Flu vaccines can help prevent:

- you getting infected with the flu
- you getting seriously ill from the flu
- you passing the flu on to others.

This is why it is a good idea for everyone who is eligible to get a flu shot, even healthy people. There are also people who are more likely to get the flu and/or are at higher risk of serious illness. These people should be sure to get flu vaccine each year:

- Adults 50 years and older (a high dose flu shot is also made for people 65 years and older).
- All children who are at least 6 months old.
- Adults and children 2 years and older with chronic health problems (such as lung, heart, diabetes, HIV/AIDS).
- Women who are or will be pregnant during the flu season.



- Children and teenagers who take daily aspirin therapy.
- People who live in nursing homes.
- People who live with or regularly take care of babies under the age of 6 months.
- Healthcare workers who work directly with patients.

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ATS American Thoracic Society

Am J Respir Crit Care Med Vol. 202, P21-P22, 2020
Online version updated September 2022
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What else can I do to prevent the flu?



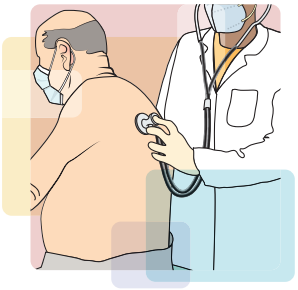
- Wash your hands often and well. Use soap and water or a hand cleaner.
- Avoid being near people who are sick,
- Keep a physical distance of at least 6 feet does help limit spread from someone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Wear a high quality mask, which can help limit spread of germs
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Keep good control of medical problems, such as asthma.



- Do not smoke or vape and avoid being around any tobacco smoke or vapors.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough, and throw away the tissue afterward.

What should I do if I get sick with the flu?

- Treat signs of flu with medicines that relieve pain and fever (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen). Never give a child aspirin without first speaking to your doctor.
- Ask your doctor about prescription medicines that can help your flu symptoms. These medicines should be started soon after the flu starts in order to help.
- Rest as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of liquids.



- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough, and throw away the tissue afterward.
- Stay home from work or school to keep from giving others the flu.

Can I get a flu vaccine at the same time as the COVID vaccine?

Yes, the flu vaccine can be given at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine. Remember to get your flu vaccine early in the flu season, as the shot takes a few weeks to start working. It is important to get both vaccines to protect yourself and those around you from these serious illnesses.

How can I tell if I have the flu or COVID 19 infection?

Flu viruses and the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 spread easily and are both likely to be around together this flu season. They all can cause a range of infection from mild to severe life-threatening illness. The flu and COVID-19 can have many similar symptoms and may be hard to tell apart. Some people with COVID-19 lose taste or smell and that is not seen with the flu. You may use an at home test kit or go to a testing site to see if you have COVID-19. You may need a lab test to confirm what infection you have if you develop symptoms. People can spread these viruses before they have symptoms and in some cases even without symptoms.



Take precautions to limit your exposure to flu and other viruses. If you are sick, call your health care provider before going to a clinic or ED to make a plan for your visit.

If you are sick and need to go out, wear a high quality mask (N95, KN95, KF94 or 3-ply medical mask) to prevent spread of germs to those around you.

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Resources:

American Thoracic Society

- www.thoracic.org/patients/
  - How Vaccines Work to Prevent Infections

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

- www.flu.gov

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