

# GET THE FLU VACCINE, NOT THE FLU!

Protect yourself from getting the flu this season with the flu vaccine! The flu vaccine is updated every year to protect against the types of flu expected to be the most common for that season.

You can get a vaccine from your primary care provider or at a health center, pharmacy, or urgent care center. Some places require appointments so call ahead if possible.



## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT FLU VACCINES

### **Can the flu vaccine cause the flu?**

No, it is not possible for the flu vaccine to give you the flu.

There are two types of flu vaccines: one made with inactivated (killed) virus, and one made with attenuated (weakened) flu virus. Both vaccine types help you build protection against the flu virus and neither vaccine can give you the flu.

### **Why do some people get side effects from the vaccine?**

Everyone's immune system is unique, so side effects vary but are typically mild. Common side effects of the flu vaccine are soreness and redness at the injection site, and sometimes headache, fever, nausea, or muscle aches. Side effects usually only last 1-2 days.

### **Why do people get the flu even though they have been vaccinated? What's the point in getting vaccinated if I can still get the flu?**

Each year the seasonal flu vaccine is made to protect against the flu viruses that scientists predict will be most common. You may become infected by a flu virus that wasn't included in the vaccine. Age and other medical conditions can also affect how well a vaccine works.

Even though the flu vaccine does not prevent every case of flu, getting a flu vaccine is the best way to lower your chance of serious illness, hospitalization and death. Plus, when you get vaccinated you help protect family and friends who are more likely to get seriously sick if they get the flu.

### **I am healthy and have never had the flu. Why should I get the flu vaccine?**

Even healthy people can get the flu. Most will recover within a week or two, but some people can develop complications like pneumonia, sepsis, and heart or brain inflammation. Even if a person doesn't get severely ill, getting the flu can mean missed days of work, loss of income and challenges with childcare.

### **Is it safe for pregnant people to get the flu vaccine?**

It is recommended that pregnant people receive their annual flu vaccine. Pregnant people are more likely to have severe disease, be hospitalized and die from flu compared to the general population. A 2018 study showed that getting a flu vaccine lowered a pregnant person's risk of being hospitalized due to flu by 40%. The inactivated flu vaccine is safe at any stage of pregnancy and protects both the parent and baby before and after birth.

### **If I don't get my flu vaccine before the winter, is it too late?**

Flu viruses usually spread in the fall and winter. Most flu cases happen between December and February, but it is possible to get the flu even into the spring. It is not too late to get this year's flu shot.