



INFLUENZA (Flu)

This information sheet provides answers to questions you may have about the flu and how vaccination may help protect those vaccinated from illness. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the best defense against getting sick with the flu is getting a vaccine each year, even though vaccination may not result in protection in all recipients.

Who should get vaccinated?

The CDC recommends vaccination, as follows:

- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu every year, unless they have had a severe allergic reaction to a flu vaccine in the past.

Why is a flu shot needed every single year?

There are different types of flu viruses (called strains) around every year. The flu vaccine may change each year to help protect you from the strains expected to be most active in the upcoming flu season. In every flu season since 2001, there were multiple strains of flu virus circulating.

How do flu vaccines work?

Flu vaccines work by helping your body to make antibodies that your immune system uses to fight off the flu virus. These antibodies are usually activated about 2 weeks after receiving the vaccine. The antibodies help provide protection against infection from the viruses that are covered by the vaccine.

Can you get the flu from the vaccine itself?

The flu vaccines that are given by needle are not infectious because they are made with viruses that are killed (inactivated) or virus proteins that are artificially made (recombinant influenza vaccine). The flu nasal spray vaccines use viruses that are alive but weakened/modified so they, too, cannot cause a person to get the flu.

Did you know?

Seasonal flu is a serious disease that causes illness, hospitalizations, and thousands to tens of thousands of deaths every year in the United States.



You have a *choice* in flu vaccines.
This flu season, GO FOR THE FOUR!

What are 4-strain flu vaccines?

Whereas some vaccines only cover 3 strains of flu, others cover 4 strains. That means you may get broader coverage against the flu with a 4-strain flu vaccine.

How do I know if a 4-strain flu vaccine is right for me and my family?

Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare professional if the 4-strain flu vaccine is right for you and your family. The CDC recommends annual vaccination, but does not recommend which type of flu vaccine to get.

Are 4-strain flu vaccines safe?

Four-strain flu vaccines are made in the same way as the 3-strain flu vaccines that have been available for many years and have been shown to be safe. The only difference is the addition of another strain. Studies have shown that 4-strain flu vaccines have a safety profile similar to 3-strain flu vaccines, with similar—mostly mild—side effects.

Who should NOT get a 4-strain flu vaccine?

Those who should NOT receive a 4-strain flu vaccine include:

- Children younger than 6 months of age and children younger than the age for which the vaccine is approved. Approved age ranges vary by vaccine.
- People who have had a severe allergic reaction to a flu vaccine, including egg proteins, in the past. If you ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction after a dose of flu vaccine, or have a severe allergy to any part of this vaccine, you may be advised not to get vaccinated. Most, but not all, types of flu vaccine contain a small amount of egg protein.

You should talk to your doctor about whether the 4-strain flu vaccine is right for you. Tell your doctor if:

- You have a moderate-to-severe illness with or without a fever. You should wait until you recover to get vaccinated.
- You have a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a severe paralytic illness, also called GBS) that occurred after receiving a flu vaccine.

There may be additional precautions for certain brands of flu vaccines.

Ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider if the 4-strain flu vaccine is right for you and your family.

Visit HelpPreventDisease.com to learn more!



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