



What are the side effects of a flu shot?

You might feel soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. You may have sore, red or itchy eyes, cough, fever, aches, or fatigue. These symptoms usually last 1-2 days. Severe allergic reactions and other serious problems from flu shots are very rare. There is no evidence linking influenza vaccines (or any other vaccine) with autism, and **you cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine.**

What if I am allergic to eggs?

If you have a mild egg allergy (i.e., you only break out in hives or you can eat scrambled eggs without a reaction), you should receive the flu vaccine. You will need to stay at the office for 30 minutes of observation. If eggs make you dizzy, make your hands or face swell, make it hard to breathe, or make you vomit, you should see a physician with expertise in allergy management.

What else can I do to stay healthy?

The CDC recommends that all persons ages 2 and older who have asthma receive the pneumococcal vaccine. You only need this shot once, not yearly. Ask your doctor about pneumococcal vaccines.

How do I get vaccinated?

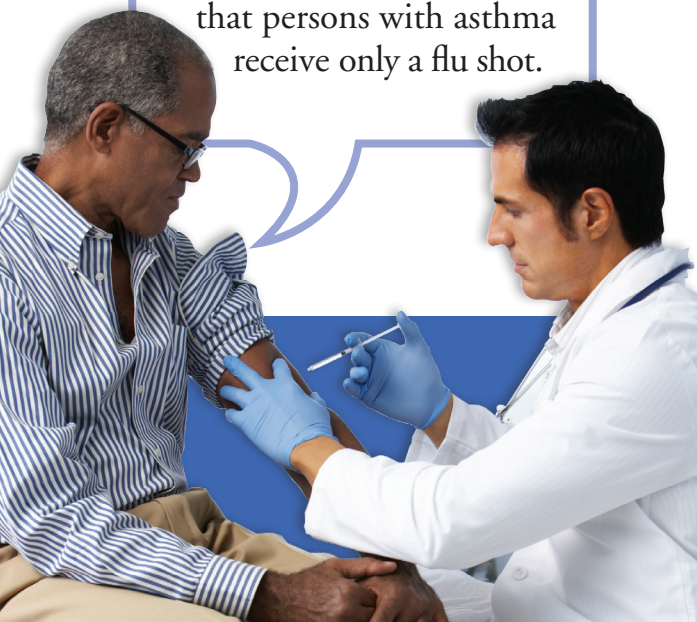
You can get a flu shot at local health departments and other health care providers. Ask your health care provider for the vaccine first.

When should I be vaccinated?

Since your body needs several weeks to build an immune response, you should be vaccinated as early in the flu season as possible.

I have asthma. Can I get the nasal spray flu vaccine?

No. The CDC recommends that persons with asthma receive only a flu shot.



Influenza Vaccination for Individuals with Asthma



A Patient's Guide

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What is “the flu”?

Influenza (“the flu”) is a viral infection transmitted through coughing, sneezing, or direct contact. The flu can cause serious infections, including pneumonia and ear/sinus infections.

Who is at risk for flu complications?

The flu can cause complications for anyone. However, the following populations are at increased risk for flu complications:

- Children ages 2 and younger
- Individuals 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- People with weakened immune systems
- People with chronic conditions such as **asthma, diabetes, congestive heart failure, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**.

If you have asthma, the flu can trigger asthma attacks and make it more difficult to breathe. You are also more likely to develop pneumonia after having the flu.

When is “flu season”?

It typically starts in late December or early January and usually peaks in February. Getting a flu vaccine soon as it’s available will protect you for the entire season.

How long is the flu contagious?

Adults who have the flu may pass the virus to others one day before symptoms appear and up to seven days after feeling sick. Children may be contagious for longer than seven days. You may be able to give someone else the flu before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.



How can I avoid catching the flu?

1. Get an annual flu vaccine
2. Practice the “Three C’s of Good Hygiene”:

CLEAN Wash your hands
COVER Cover your cough and sneeze
CONTAIN Contain your germs—
stay home if you are sick

What are the symptoms of flu?

The most common flu symptoms are:

- High fever (100-102 °F) that lasts for days
- Fatigue lasting several weeks
- Body aches and pains
- Headache
- Stuffy nose
- Cough
- Sore throat

Influenza is **not** associated with nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

I think I have the flu. What now?

If your doctor suspects that you have the flu or that you need additional protection, he or she can prescribe medication. To reduce flu symptoms, medication must be taken within 48 hours. Practicing the “Three C’s of Good Hygiene”—**Clean** (wash your hands), **Cover** your coughs and sneezes, and **Contain** your germs--will help to keep from spreading the flu.



What is in the flu vaccine?

A seasonal flu vaccine protects against the most common strains of influenza that the World Health Organization predicts will dominate in the upcoming season. You need a flu vaccine every year to be protected.

How does the vaccine work?

There are two types of flu vaccines—injections (“flu shots”) and an inhaled nasal spray. Within 2-3 weeks of receiving either vaccine, your body develops an immune response to the virus.

Who should be vaccinated?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all persons 6 months and older get a flu vaccine. Children may need a booster dose. Your health care provider can tell you the right flu vaccine doses for your children.

Can I catch the flu from a flu shot?

No. The flu shot does not contain live or active virus.