



# Protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu.\*

The flu is a contagious virus infection that usually appears in the fall and winter months. Symptoms include coughing, sore throat, running nose, muscle aches and fever. It can cause serious illness, hospital admissions and death.

## How does the flu spread?

People who have the flu can spread the virus through droplets when they sneeze, cough, or talk.

- Infected droplets can land in your nose, mouth or eyes if you are nearby.
- A person who is sick can transfer droplets onto objects such as doorknobs. You can accidentally infect yourself by touching the doorknob and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes.

## Do I really need a vaccine every year?

To get the best protection, you do need a yearly vaccination.

- The circulating virus changes every year so vaccines are also updated yearly.
- The protection you received from last year will decline over time.

## How effective is the flu vaccine?

Vaccines can reduce your chance of getting sick by 40–60%. Vaccines are still recommended even when the match is not a good one. They will make you less sick if you catch the flu.

## If I can't catch the flu from the vaccine, why do some people feel badly after receiving a vaccine?

- It is common to have soreness, redness or swelling where the shot was given.
- Some people may get a low-grade fever, headache and muscle aches.

### **I'm pretty healthy. Do I still need a flu vaccine?**

Some people are more likely to get complications from the flu. They include: older adults, younger children, pregnant women, and those with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, cancer, stroke, spinal cord injury and heart disease. But even healthy people can get the flu. Your best protection is to get a vaccine.

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

No, vaccines do not cause flu infections.

## The flu burden

For the 2019–2020 flu season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there were<sup>2</sup>:



39,000,000–56,000,000  
flu illnesses



18,000,000–26,000,000  
flu medical visits



410,000–740,000  
flu hospitalizations



24,000–62,000  
flu deaths

## Who should be vaccinated?

Everyone 6 months of age or older should receive a vaccine. It is the best way to protect yourself and those around you.<sup>1,3</sup>

## When should I get vaccinated?

The ideal time is in the early fall, before the end of October.<sup>1,3</sup>



**Don't wait.**

**Talk to your doctor about how to schedule your flu vaccination today.**  
[optum.com/flu](https://www.optum.com/flu)

\*Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Key facts about seasonal flu vaccine. [cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm). Accessed April 27, 2020.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2019-2020 US flu season: Preliminary burden estimates. [cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/preliminary-in-season-estimates.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/preliminary-in-season-estimates.htm). Accessed April 27, 2020.
3. Grohskopf LA, Alyanak E, Broder KR, Walter EB, Fry AM, Jernigan DB. Prevention and control of seasonal influenza with vaccines: Recommendations of the advisory committee on immunization practices — United States, 2019–20 Influenza Season. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2019;68(No. RR-3):1–21. [dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr6803a1](https://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr6803a1).

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