Who should get vaccinated this season?

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every season. Vaccination is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. See People at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications for a full list of age and health factors that confer increased risk.

Flu vaccination has important benefits. It can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. Flu vaccine also has been shown to be life-saving in children. In fact, a 2017 study showed that flu vaccination can significantly reduce a child’s risk of dying from flu.

Different flu vaccines are approved for use in different groups of people. There are flu shots approved for use in children as young as 6 months of age and flu shots approved for use in adults 65 years and older. Flu shots also are recommended for use in pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions. The nasal spray flu vaccine is approved for use in non-pregnant individuals, 2 years through 49 years of age. People with some medical conditions should not receive the nasal spray flu vaccine.

There are many vaccine options to choose from. CDC does not recommend one flu vaccine over another. The most important thing is for all people 6 months and older to get a flu vaccine every year. If you have questions about which vaccine is best for you, talk to your doctor or other health care professional.

More information is available at Who Should Get Vaccinated Against Influenza.

Who Should Not Receive a Flu Shot:

Factors that can determine a person’s suitability for vaccination, or vaccination with a particular vaccine, include a person’s age, health (current and past) and any relevant allergies.

Information for who cannot get a flu vaccine and who should talk to their doctor before getting a flu vaccine is available at Who Should & Who Should NOT Get Vaccinated.

When should I get vaccinated?

You should get a flu vaccine before flu begins spreading in your community. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies that protect against flu to develop in the body. CDC recommends that people get a flu vaccine by the end of October. Getting vaccinated later, however, can still be beneficial and vaccination should continue to be offered throughout the flu season, even into January or later.

Children who need two doses of vaccine to be protected should start the vaccination process sooner, because the two doses must be given at least four weeks apart.

Special Consideration Regarding Egg Allergy

People with egg allergies can receive any licensed, recommended age-appropriate influenza vaccine (IIV, RIV4, or LAIV4) that is otherwise appropriate. People who have a history of severe egg allergy (those who have had any symptom other than hives after exposure to egg) should be vaccinated in a medical setting, supervised by a health care provider who is able to recognize and manage severe allergic reactions.