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Who Needs a Flu Vaccine and When

Who should get vaccinated this season?

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every season with rare exceptions. Vaccination is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. [People at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications](#) has 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 and deaths.

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 old and flu shots approved for use in adults 65 years and older.
- Flu shots also are recommended and approved for use in pregnant women and people with certain chronic health conditions.
- The nasal spray flu vaccine is approved for use in non-pregnant individuals who are 2 years through 49 years of age. People with some certain 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 of age and older to get a flu vaccine every year.

If you have questions about which flu vaccine to get, talk to your doctor or other health care professional. More information is available at [Who Should Get Vaccinated](#).

Flu Vaccine for 2020-2021 Season

For 2020-2021, CDC recommends use of any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine as an option for vaccination this season. These include:

- [injectable flu vaccines, or flu shots](#),
- [live attenuated influenza vaccines, or nasal spray](#).

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](#).

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 symptoms 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. Two completely egg-free (ovalbumin-free) flu vaccine options are available: quadrivalent [recombinant vaccine](#) and quadrivalent [cell-based vaccine](#).

When should I get vaccinated?

You should get a flu vaccine before flu viruses begin spreading in your community since it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against flu. Make plans to get vaccinated early in fall, before flu season begins. CDC recommends that people get a flu vaccine by the end of October. However, getting vaccinated early (for example, in July or August) is likely to be associated with reduced protection against flu infection later in the flu season, particularly among older adults. 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.

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