

Your Health and Safety Matters!

It's Holiday (and Influenza) Season!

Vaccination Week is December 5-11, 2021



The **single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated** each year, but good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu. There also are [flu antiviral drugs](#) that can be used to treat and prevent flu.

Why get vaccinated?

Influenza (“flu”) is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year, usually between October and May.

Flu is caused by influenza viruses, and is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing, and close contact.

Flu can also lead to pneumonia and blood infections, and cause diarrhea and seizures in children. If you have a medical condition, such as heart or lung disease, flu can make it worse.

Flu is more dangerous for some people. Infants and young children, people 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions or a weakened immune system are at greatest risk.

Each year *thousands of people in the United States die from flu*, and many more are hospitalized.

**THERE ARE OVER 200 DIFFERENT
TYPES OF VIRUSES, NOT
NECESSARILY INFLUENZA, THAT
CAUSE FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS.**



Influenza History

The earliest existing descriptions of influenza were written nearly 2500 years ago by the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates. Historically, influenza was ascribed to a number of different agents, including "bad air" and several different bacteria. In fact, its name comes from the Italian word for "influence," because people in eighteenth-century Europe thought that the disease was caused by the influence of bad weather. It was not until 1933 that the causative agent was identified as a virus.

There are three types of influenza viruses, identified as A, B, and C. Influenza A can infect a range of animal species, including humans, pigs, horses, and birds, but only humans are infected by types B and C. Influenza A is responsible for most flu cases, while infection with types B and C virus are less common and cause a milder illness.

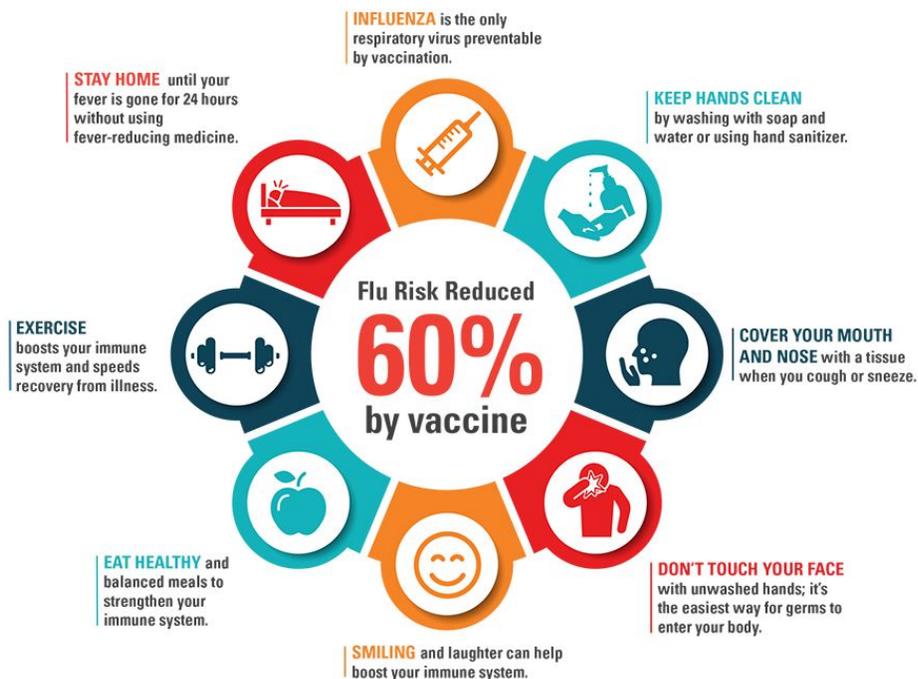
In the United States, 90% of all deaths from influenza occur among persons older than 65. Flu-related deaths have increased substantially in the United States since the 1970s, largely because of the **aging** of the American population. In addition, elderly persons are vulnerable because they are often reluctant to be vaccinated against flu.

[Take time to get a flu vaccine.](#)

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Getting a flu vaccine during 2020-2021 will be more important than ever.

- Flu vaccines will not prevent COVID-19, but they will reduce the burden of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths on the health care system and conserve scarce medical resources for the care of people with COVID-19. (Read more about [flu vaccine benefits](#).)
- CDC estimates that last season, fewer than half of Americans got a flu vaccine and at least 410,000 people were hospitalized from flu. Increased vaccination coverage would reduce that burden.
- Most flu vaccines protect against the four flu viruses that research suggests will be most common. (See [Vaccine Virus Selection](#) for this season's vaccine composition.)
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get annual flu vaccine by the end of October. Learn more about [vaccine timing](#).
- Vaccination of [high risk persons](#) is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- [People at high risk of serious flu complications](#) include young children, [pregnant women](#), people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and [people 65 years and older](#). Many people at higher risk from flu also seem to be at higher risk from COVID-19.
- Vaccination also is important for [health care workers](#), and other people who live with or care for people at higher risk to keep from spreading flu to them. This is especially true for people who work in long-term care facilities, which are home to many of the people most vulnerable to flu and COVID-19.
- [Children younger than 6 months](#) are at high risk of serious flu illness but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for infants should be vaccinated instead

Flu Prevention Tips



Flu Vaccination for People at High Risk

Another goal is to communicate the importance of flu vaccination for people who are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications.

- *People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease, and people aged 65 years and older.*
- *For people at high risk, getting the flu can be more serious than for other people. Flu is more likely to lead to hospitalization or death for people at high risk.*
- *Flu vaccine uptake estimates among adults 50 years and older fell by 3 percentage points last year. That means many more adults were left vulnerable to flu and its complications.*
- *Anyone who gets flu can pass it to someone at high risk of severe illness, including infants younger than 6 months who are too young to get the vaccine.*

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/nivw/index.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/prevention.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/vaccinations.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/travelers/travelersfacts.htm>

<https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/flu-guide/flu-overview-facts>

<http://www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org/flu-facts>

<https://healthresearchfunding.org/12-interesting-facts-influenza/>

Are You Concerned about Flu and Traveling overseas during the Holiday Season?

Check Out: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/traveler-information-center>

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