



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

## What's New for 2023-2024

### A couple of things are different for the 2023-2024 influenza (flu) season:

- The composition of flu vaccines has been updated.
- Flu vaccines for the U.S. 2023-2024 season will contain the following:
  - Egg-based vaccines
    - an A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus; **(Updated)**
    - an A/Darwin/9/2021 (H3N2)-like virus;
    - a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus; and
    - a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.
  - Cell- or recombinant-based vaccines
    - an A/Wisconsin/67/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus; **(Updated)**
    - an A/Darwin/6/2021 (H3N2)-like virus;
    - a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus; and
    - a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.
    - These recommendations include **one update** compared to the 2022-2023 U.S. flu vaccine composition. The influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 vaccine virus component was updated for egg-based and cell- or recombinant-based flu vaccines.
- People with egg allergy may get any vaccine (egg-based or non-egg-based) that is otherwise appropriate for their age and health status. Previously, it was recommended that people with severe allergy to egg (those who have had any symptom other than hives with egg exposure) be vaccinated in an inpatient or outpatient medical setting. Beginning with the 2023-2024 season, additional safety measures are no longer recommended for flu vaccination of people with an egg allergy beyond those recommended for receipt of any vaccine, regardless of the severity of previous reaction to egg. All vaccines should be given in settings where allergic reactions can be recognized and treated quickly.

## Flu Key Facts

### What is Influenza (Flu)?

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

## Flu Symptoms

Influenza (flu) can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Flu symptoms usually come on suddenly. People who have flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- fever\* or feeling feverish/chills
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle or body aches
- headaches
- fatigue (tiredness)
- some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

\*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

## How Flu Spreads

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by tiny droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes.

## Period of Contagiousness

You may be able to spread flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as when you are sick with symptoms.

- People with flu are most contagious in the first 3-4 days after their illness begins.
- Some otherwise healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning one day **before** symptoms develop and up to five to seven days **after** becoming sick.
- Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

## Onset of Symptoms

The time from when a person is exposed and infected with flu to when symptoms begin is about two days, but can range from about one to four days.

## People at Higher Risk from Flu

Anyone can get flu (even healthy people), and serious problems related to flu can happen at any age, but some people are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications if they get sick. This includes people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant people, and children younger than 5 years.

## **Preventing Seasonal Flu**

The first and most important step in preventing flu is to get a flu vaccine each year. Flu vaccine has been shown to reduce flu related illnesses and the risk of serious flu complications that can result in hospitalization or even death. CDC also recommends everyday preventive actions (like staying away from people who are sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and frequent handwashing) to help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory (nose, throat, and lungs) illnesses, like flu.

## **Flu Vaccine**

### **Groups recommended for vaccination:**

- Routine annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged  $\geq 6$  months who do not have contraindications.
- For people younger than 65 years, CDC does not recommend any one flu vaccine over another.
- For adults 65 years and older, there are three flu vaccines that are preferentially recommended for people 65 years and older. These are *Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent inactivated flu vaccine*, *Flublok Quadrivalent recombinant flu vaccine* and *Fluad Quadrivalent adjuvanted inactivated flu vaccine*. If none of the three flu vaccines preferentially recommended for people 65 and older is available at the time of administration, people in this age group can get any other age-appropriate flu vaccine instead.

### **Are any of the available flu vaccines recommended over others?**

Yes, for some people. There are three flu vaccines that are preferentially recommended for people 65 years and older. These are *Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine*, *Flublok Quadrivalent recombinant flu vaccine* and *Fluad Quadrivalent adjuvanted flu vaccine*. This recommendation was based on a review of available studies which suggests that, in this age group, these vaccines are potentially more effective than standard dose unadjuvanted flu vaccines. There is no preferential recommendation for people younger than 65 years.

### **What if a preferentially recommended flu vaccine is not available?**

If none of the three flu vaccines preferentially recommended for people 65 years and older is available at the time of administration, people in this age group should get any other age-appropriate flu vaccine instead.

### **What is the best time to get my influenza vaccine?**

For most people who need only one dose of flu vaccine for the season, **September and October** are generally good times to be vaccinated against flu. Ideally, everyone should be vaccinated by the end of October.

Additional considerations concerning the timing of vaccination for certain groups of people include:

- **Most adults, especially those 65 years and older, and pregnant people in the first or second trimester should generally not get vaccinated early (in July or August) because protection may decrease over time. However, early vaccination can be considered for any person who is unable to return at a later time to be vaccinated.**
- Some children need two doses of flu vaccine. For those children it is recommended to get the first dose as soon as vaccine is available, because the second dose needs to be given at least four weeks after the first. Vaccination during July and August also can be considered for children who need only one dose.

### **Flu Treatment**

If you get sick with flu, influenza antiviral drugs may be a treatment option. Antiviral drugs work best when started early, such as one to two days after your flu symptoms begin.

Check with your doctor promptly if you are at higher risk of serious flu complications and you get flu symptoms. People at higher risk of flu complications include young children, adults 65 years of age and older, pregnant people, and people with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

When treatment is started within 1-2 days after flu symptoms begin, influenza antiviral drugs can lessen symptoms and shorten the time you are sick by 1 or 2 days. They might also prevent some flu complications, like pneumonia. For people at higher risk of serious flu complications, treatment with influenza antiviral drugs can mean the difference between milder or more serious illness possibly resulting in a hospital stay.

Last Reviewed: October 24, 2023

Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#)

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## Multi-Language Insert

### Multi-language Interpreter Services

**English:** We have free interpreter services to answer any questions you may have about our health or drug plan. To get an interpreter, just call us at 833-342-7463 (TTY: 711). Someone who speaks English/Language can help you. This is a free service.

**Spanish:** Tenemos servicios de intérprete sin costo alguno para responder cualquier pregunta que pueda tener sobre nuestro plan de salud o medicamentos. Para hablar con un intérprete, por favor llame al 833-342-7463 (TTY: 711). Alguien que hable español le podrá ayudar. Este es un servicio gratuito.

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**Tagalog:** Mayroon kaming libreng serbisyo sa pagsasaling-wika upang masagot ang anumang mga katanungan ninyo hinggil sa aming planong pangkalusugan o panggamot. Upang makakuha ng tagasaling-wika, tawagan lamang kami sa 833-342-7463 (TTY: 711). Maaari kayong tulungan ng isang nakakapagsalita ng Tagalog. Ito ay libreng serbisyo.

**French:** Nous proposons des services gratuits d'interprétation pour répondre à toutes vos questions relatives à notre régime de santé ou d'assurance-médicaments. Pour accéder au service d'interprétation, il vous suffit de nous appeler au 833-342-7463 (TTY: 711). Un interlocuteur parlant Français pourra vous aider. Ce service est gratuit.

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**German:** Unser kostenloser Dolmetscherservice beantwortet Ihren Fragen zu unserem Gesundheits- und Arzneimittelplan. Unsere Dolmetscher erreichen Sie unter 833-342-7463 (TTY: 711). Man wird Ihnen dort auf Deutsch weiterhelfen. Dieser Service ist kostenlos.

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**Russian:** Если у вас возникнут вопросы относительно страхового или медикаментного плана, вы можете воспользоваться нашими бесплатными услугами переводчиков. Чтобы воспользоваться услугами переводчика, позвоните нам по телефону 833-342-7463 (TTY: 711). Вам окажет помощь сотрудник, который говорит по-русски. Данная услуга бесплатная.

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**Portuguese:** Dispomos de serviços de interpretação gratuitos para responder a qualquer questão que tenha acerca do nosso plano de saúde ou de medicação. Para obter um intérprete, contacte-nos através do número 833-342-7463 (TTY: 711). Irá encontrar alguém que fale o idioma Português para o ajudar. Este serviço é gratuito.

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