

Flu Frequently Asked Questions

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What are the symptoms of the flu?

Influenza is a respiratory illness. People who have the 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
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

Who should get vaccinated?

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends universal annual Influenza vaccination which includes all people aged 6 months and older.

Will the seasonal vaccine protect me against the 2009 H1N1 virus?

Yes, the 2010-2011 seasonal vaccine also includes the 2009 H1N1-like virus. This means you will be able to receive one flu shot to protect yourself and others from the flu.

Who should not be vaccinated?

There are some people who should not get a flu vaccine without first consulting a physician. These include:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs.
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination.
- People who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine.
- Children less than 6 months of age (influenza vaccine is not approved for this age group), and

- People who have a moderate-to-severe illness with a fever (they should wait until they recover to get vaccinated.)

Do I need to get an influenza vaccine every year?

Yes. To be protected from the current circulating influenza viruses, it is recommended that you receive a flu vaccine each year. Influenza viruses change from year to year; therefore, a new vaccine must be created each year, and annual vaccination is necessary.

When to get vaccinated?

Yearly flu vaccination should begin in September or as soon as vaccine is available and continue throughout the influenza season, into December, January, and beyond. This is because the timing and duration of influenza seasons vary. While influenza outbreaks can happen as early as October, most of the time influenza activity peaks in January or later.

What is included in the season flu shot?

Based on the FDA recommendation the new seasonal flu vaccine to be used in the 2010-2011 influenza season will contain the following:

- (Seasonal Influenza A) 2009 H1N1-like virus
- (Influenza A) H3N2-like virus
- (Influenza B) B strain-like virus

The seasonal flu vaccine is usually a trivalent vaccine (a three component vaccine) with each component selected to protect against one of the three groups of influenza viruses circulating most commonly in humans.

What should you do if you get the flu?

There are some prescription medications available that will help to prevent or treat influenza. Consult your doctor or pharmacist to learn more about these options.

Source: US Centers for Disease Control