



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People. Saving Money Through Prevention.

## Key Facts About Seasonal Flu Vaccine

There are two types of vaccines:

- **The “flu shot”** — an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.  
Flu Shot: Vaccination Information Statement (VIS)
- **The nasal-spray flu vaccine** — a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for “live attenuated influenza vaccine” or FluMist®). LAIV (FluMist®) is approved for use in healthy\* people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.  
Nasal Spray: Vaccination Information Statement (VIS)

**The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year.**

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against three influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. The 2010-2011 flu vaccine will protect against 2009 H1N1, and two other influenza viruses (an H3N2 virus and an influenza B virus). The viruses in the vaccine change each year based on international surveillance and scientists' estimations about which types and strains of viruses will circulate in a given year. About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against influenza virus infection develop in the body.

### 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.

### Where to Get Vaccinated

Get vaccinated wherever you see vaccine available in your community. Your doctor’s office, a public health clinic, supermarkets, pharmacies, schools, churches, senior centers, and a variety of other places are offering flu vaccine this season. Use this handy “Flu Vaccine Finder” widget to locate places offering flu vaccine near you.

**Flu Vaccine Finder** Find flu clinics near you

The new seasonal flu vaccine protects against H1N1. All ages need protection.

Order down until next flu season


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### Who Should Get Vaccinated

On February 24, 2010 vaccine experts voted that everyone 6 months and older should get a flu

- Fever (low grade)
- Aches

If these problems occur, they begin soon after the shot and usually last 1 to 2 days. Almost all people who receive influenza vaccine have no serious problems from it. However, on rare occasions, flu vaccination can cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. As of July 1, 2005, people who think that they have been injured by the flu shot can file a claim for compensation from the [National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program \(VICP\)](#) .

**The nasal spray (also called LAIV or FluMist®):** The viruses in the nasal-spray vaccine are weakened and do not cause severe symptoms often associated with influenza illness. (In clinical studies, transmission of vaccine viruses to close contacts has occurred only rarely.) In children, side effects from LAIV (FluMist®) can include:

- runny nose
- wheezing
- headache
- vomiting
- muscle aches
- fever

In adults, side effects from LAIV (FluMist®) can include

- runny nose
- headache
- sore throat
- cough

## Flu Clinic Locations Open To The Public

- [Flu Vaccine Locator](#) 

\* "Healthy" indicates persons who do not have an underlying medical condition that predisposes them to influenza complications.

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vaccine each year starting with the 2010-2011 influenza season. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted for "universal" flu vaccination in the U.S. to expand protection against the flu to more people.

While everyone should get a flu vaccine each flu season, it's especially important that the following groups get vaccinated either because they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing flu-related complications:

1. Pregnant women
2. Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
3. People 50 years of age and older
4. People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
5. People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
6. People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
  1. Health care workers
  2. Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
  3. Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

## Use of the Nasal Spray Flu Vaccine

*It should be noted that vaccination with the nasal-spray flu vaccine is always an option for healthy\* people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.*

## 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.)

## Vaccine Effectiveness

The ability of a flu vaccine to protect a person depends on the age and health status of the person getting the vaccine, and the similarity or "match" between the viruses or virus in the vaccine and those in circulation.

## Vaccine Side Effects (What to Expect)

Different side effects can be associated with the flu shot and LAIV.

**The flu shot:** The viruses in the flu shot are killed (inactivated), so you cannot get the flu from a flu shot. Some minor side effects that could occur are:

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given