

Flu Facts 2017-2018

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine is designed to protect against the main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season.

What kind of flu vaccines are available for 2017-2018?

There are several flu vaccine options for the 2016-2017 flu season.

Traditional flu vaccines made to protect against three different flu viruses (called “trivalent” vaccines) are available. In addition, flu vaccines made to protect against four different flu viruses (called “quadrivalent” vaccines) also are available.

- **Trivalent (3-Strain) Flu Shot:** an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The trivalent flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

- **Trivalent High Dose:** a high-dose flu vaccine approved for people 65 and older, Fluzone High-Dose vaccine contains four times the amount of antigen (the part of the vaccine that prompts the body to make antibody) contained in regular flu vaccines. The additional antigen is intended to create a stronger immune response (more antibody) in the person getting the vaccine.

- **Quadrivalent (4-Strain) Flu Shot:** an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The quadrivalent flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

- **Quadrivalent Nasal-Spray Flu Mist:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory committee and the ACIP recommended that FluMist, the nasal spray influenza vaccine, should not be used during the 2016-2017 flu season.

Seasonal Flu Vaccine protects against the viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. The viruses in the vaccine can change each year based on international surveillance and scientists’ estimations about which types and strains of viruses will circulate in a given year.



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Why Do I Need a Flu Vaccine Every Year?

A flu vaccine is needed every year because flu viruses are constantly changing. It's not unusual for new flu viruses to appear each year. The flu vaccine is formulated each year to keep up with the flu viruses as they change.

Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs

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.

- **Avoid close contact.**

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

- **Stay home when you are sick.**

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

- **Cover your mouth and nose.**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

- **Clean your hands.**

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

- **Practice other good health habits.**

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.