



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Influenza activity is rising in the U.S. at this time. Outpatient visits for influenza-like-illness are above the national baseline. Activity is expected to continue during the coming weeks.

Protect yourself and your family this season with an annual flu vaccine for everyone in your family who is 6 months and older. As long as flu activity is ongoing, **it's not too late to get vaccinated, even in January or later.** It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect against influenza virus infection, so if you haven't already, now is the time to get your flu shot!

3 Actions you can take:

Flu is a serious contagious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. You have the power to protect yourself and your family this season with these three actions to fight flu.

1. **Get a flu vaccine.** Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine. As long as flu activity is ongoing, it's not too late to get vaccinated, even in January or later.
2. **Take everyday actions to stop the spread of germs.** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and wash your hands often with soap and water. If you become sick, limit your contact with others to keep from infecting them.
3. **Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.** If you get the flu, medicine, called antiviral drugs, can be used to treat flu illness. Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

Who Is at Risk?

Everyone is at risk for getting the flu. For millions of people each year, the flu can cause a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, headache, chills and fatigue. But for some people, the flu can be more severe. CDC estimates that since 2010, flu-related hospitalizations in the United States ranged from 140,000 to 710,000 people and flu-related deaths have ranged from 12,000 to 56,000 people.

Some people are at greater risk for serious flu-related complications like pneumonia or worsening of existing chronic health conditions. For those at greater risk for complications, it's especially important to get vaccinated every season. It's also important for those people to check with a doctor promptly about taking antivirals if flu symptoms develop. Some of the groups at greater risk include the following:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women (and women up to two weeks postpartum)
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities



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