



## Flu Facts

- 23,000 people die each year from the flu.
- The flu virus mutates quickly and it is almost impossible to catch the same flu twice.
- The flu virus is typically spread through coughing and sneezing.
- You can spread the flu to others before you have symptoms.
- You must get a new flu shot each year because the previous year's vaccine is too weak to protect you.

Facts from [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

For more information, visit [www.hss.edu](http://www.hss.edu). To make an appointment, call our Physician Referral Service at 800.796.0486.

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## Facts You Should Know About the Flu

*The "flu" refers to illnesses caused by different influenza viruses. Approximately 5% to 20% of Americans contract the flu annually. Symptoms include sneezing, sore throat, coughing, body aches and sometimes a fever or the chills. ([www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov))*

### How do I protect myself?

The best way to protect against seasonal flu is to get a seasonal flu vaccine each year. **Everyone six months and older should get the vaccine, especially those who have a higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these high-risk groups include:

- Pregnant women
- Children younger than five, but especially those younger than two years old
- People 50 years of age or older
- People with chronic or complex medical conditions like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or diabetes
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, such as health care workers

### What kinds of vaccines are available?

Two types of vaccines exist: the flu shot and the nasal spray. The regular shot is for those six months and older. The nasal spray is only intended for healthy people 2 to 49 years of age who are not pregnant. ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

### Can I get the flu from the vaccine?

No. The viruses in the vaccine are either dead or too weak to cause harm. You can still catch the flu even after vaccination, but the symptoms will be milder. You should know that the vaccine takes about two weeks to work because your immune system must first make antibodies. ([www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov))



**Everyone six months and older should get the flu vaccine, especially those who have a higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications.**

### When to get vaccinated

The flu season typically lasts from early October to late May. The CDC urges people to be vaccinated as soon as it is available. Vaccination before December is best because the flu peaks between January and February, but a vaccine at any time also helps. If you are planning on having surgery, be sure to have your vaccination at least seven days before the date of surgery.

### Where to get the vaccine

- Physician's office
- Pharmacy/drug store
- Local health department
- Workplace
- Medical center/clinic
- Community center

**Still not sure where to go in your area? Try the American Lung Association Flu Vaccine Finder!** ([www.lungusa.org/lung-disease/influenza/flu-vaccine-finder](http://www.lungusa.org/lung-disease/influenza/flu-vaccine-finder))

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