

FREQUENTLY ASKED FLU QUESTIONS

Q. Will I get the flu from the flu shot?

A. No. Flu vaccine is created from dead or inactive viruses that are not contagious.

Q. Do I need a flu shot every year?

A. Yes. Influenza viruses continually change every year. A new vaccine is used annually to fight the most current influenza virus. In addition, the antibody a person develops from the vaccine declines over time.

Q. When should I get a flu shot?

A. Influenza usually occurs from November until April, with activity peaking between late December and early March. The optimal time for flu shots is during October through November, however, it is clinically beneficial to be vaccinated through December and January.

Q. Why get a flu shot?

A. Influenza usually leaves its victims unable to function for several days and is responsible for an average of 200,000 hospitalizations each year. Getting an annual flu shot is your best protection.

Q. How effective is the flu shot?

A. Flu vaccine has been determined to be about 75% effective in preventing the flu and is your best method of protection.

Q. Who should get a flu shot?

A. The CDC recommends that you receive a flu shot if you meet their criteria of high-risk or one of the following categories:

- Anyone who wants to reduce the risk of contracting the flu
- Over the age of 50
- Have high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, history of stroke or heart attack, a chronic disease, diabetes, compromised immune system, anemia, asthma or other breathing problems
- A health care worker with high-risk patients
- Have required regular medical follow-up or hospitalization during the preceding year because of chronic metabolic, kidney or blood cell diseases
- Traveling to a foreign country
- Living or working with persons who fit into one of these categories

Q. Can I still get the flu after I get the flu shot?

A. Yes. Like other vaccines, flu vaccine is not 100% effective and does not take effect until one or two weeks after it is received. During this time, you will be just as susceptible to contract the flu as individuals who have not received the vaccination. Still, the best option to prevent the flu is to get a yearly flu shot.

Q. Am I classified as high-risk?

A. You are classified as high risk if you fall under one of the following categories:

- 65 years of age or older
- A household contact of persons at increased risk of influenza-related complications
- A resident or employee of a nursing home or other chronic care facility where some of the residents have chronic medical conditions
- Have a chronic medical condition such as: asthma, or another lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, blood disease
- Have immune system problems caused either by disease (e.g., HIV or lymphoma) or by medication (e.g., chemotherapy or radiation therapy)
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- A child or teenager, 6 months – 18 years of age, who is receiving long-term aspirin therapy (if under 18 years of age, see management at the clinic location for minimum age requirements)
- A healthcare worker who cares for high-risk patients in the patients' homes.

Q. What are the side effects of getting a flu shot?

A. For most people, vaccination causes no side effects. Less than 1/3 of those who receive a flu shot will experience some soreness at the vaccination site, and only 5 to 10% will suffer mild side effects such as low-grade fevers and headaches. Anyone