



Getting a Flu Shot – *What You Need to Know*

Influenza (“flu”) is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year. It is most common between October and May. Flu is caused by influenza viruses. It is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing, and close contact. Anyone can get the flu. Flu strikes quickly and can last several days.

Most people with the flu get better on their own. But it can be serious. It can cause complications and sometimes even death. Getting the flu vaccine every year is the best way to lower your chance of getting the flu and spreading it to others.

The Flu Vaccine Can:

- Keep you from getting the flu
- Make the flu less severe if you do get it
- Keep you from spreading the flu to others

The flu vaccine **cannot cause the flu.**

There are many flu viruses, and they are always changing. Each year a new vaccine is made to protect against three or four viruses that are likely to cause the flu that season. Even when the vaccine doesn’t exactly match these viruses, it may still provide some protection.



The Flu Vaccine Cannot Prevent:

- A flu that is caused by a virus not covered by the shot
- Illnesses that look like flu but are not

Everyone **6 months of age and older** should get a flu vaccine **every year**. Flu vaccines can either be shots or nasal sprays. There is also a high-dose version for people 65 and older. **Ask your doctor which one is right for you.** It takes about 2 weeks for protection to develop after the vaccine. Protection lasts through the flu season.

Check with your doctor before getting the flu shot if you have any of the following:

- Egg allergies
- Allergic reactions to flu shots before
- Guillain-Barre Syndrome
- A fever

To request information in your language or in another format, call L.A. Care at **1-888-839-9909** or TTY **711**.