

NORTH BAY REGIONAL CENTER



FLU SEASON 2021/2022



Every October we inevitably hear, “It’s Flu Season!” and are urged to get our annual flu vaccine. To many, this may seem like much ado about a common illness, or they may feel overwhelmed with all the virus and vaccine ‘talk’ from the past two years. But let’s explore, the basic WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and WHY of the flu to help us better understand The Flu and help us make health conscious decisions!



What is the flu:

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness that is caused by the influenza *virus*. This means that it can easily be spread from person to person through droplets; this can happen when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or does anything to expel the air from their lungs and mouth. It can affect your lungs, nose and throat. Although it is common, *it can be deadly among high risk groups, including:*

- Older adults
- Young children
- Pregnant women
- Persons with a compromised immune system

To learn more about the flu, [click here](#).

Who needs the vaccine?

It may seem like the “High Risk” group may be the only ones that really need to be worried about the flu, so why is the yearly vaccine recommended for everyone 6 months and older? Keep in mind that the flu still has the potential to make healthy people sick and infected persons can still pass the flu to others including unvaccinated or ‘High Risk’ persons- even if they don’t have any symptoms! Click here to learn more about [“Immune Response Following Vaccination”](#) and how to [“Stop the Spread!”](#)

When to get the flu vaccine?

Annual flu season in North America is typically from October into May. Currently, flu vaccines are being offered through most major pharmacies and you can check with your PCP to find out if they are offering vaccines at this time.

A common question that is often asked: “I got my flu vaccine last year, why do I need another one this year?” The answer is this: It is important to keep in mind that immunity to the flu wanes overtime, and the annual flu shot gives us a boost! Every flu season, the flu shot is specifically formulated to fight the most common flu strain(s) that are predicted to be circulating that year- even if you happen to get a different strain, the vaccine may be similar enough to offer some protection! [Recent studies show that flu vaccination reduces the risk of flu illness by between 40% and 60%](#), so it is possible to still get the flu, even with the vaccination, but even then, it can reduce risk of flu-related hospitalization! ([Link to the supporting evidence](#))



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

-ANSWERS FROM THE CDC-

Can I get the flu from the flu vaccine? No, the flu vaccines are formulated with inactivated (killed) viruses, or, in the case of the nasal spray, the virus is an attenuated (weakened) and they are not able to cause illness. Keep in mind that no vaccine is 100% effective and it is still possible to catch the flu. It takes about 2 weeks after the shot for the vaccine to take full effect and it is possible to catch the flu right before or during that 2-week window.

Does the flu vaccine cause side effects? Flu vaccines can cause mild side effects like soreness, redness and/or swelling from the shot, headache, fever, nausea, and muscle aches. These side effects generally go away on their own within a few days.

Should Pregnant women receive the flu vaccine? Yes, pregnant women should get a flu shot to protect themselves and their developing babies; this is especially important because babies can receive passive immunity through the vaccinated mother (babies are not eligible for the shot until they are 6 months or older!)

Are there signs or symptoms that should cause concern after getting a flu vaccine? With any vaccine, look for any unusual conditions, such as a high fever, behavior changes, or signs of a severe allergic reaction. These symptoms would most likely occur within a few minutes to a few hours after receiving the vaccine

Is the flu vaccine safe? Yes, extensive research supports the safety of seasonal flu vaccines. Each year, CDC works with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other partners to ensure the highest safety standards are met.

If I have an egg allergy, can I still get the shot? People with egg allergies can receive any licensed, recommended age-appropriate influenza vaccine that is otherwise appropriate. People who have a history of severe egg allergy (those who have had any symptom other than hives after exposure to egg) should be vaccinated in a medical setting, supervised by a health care provider who is able to recognize and manage severe allergic reactions. Two completely egg-free (ovalbumin-free) flu vaccine options are available: quadrivalent recombinant vaccine and quadrivalent cell-based vaccine.

Can I take the flu vaccine at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine? Yes, COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may now be administered without regard to timing. This includes receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines on the same day.

Should a flu vaccine be given to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19? No. Flu vaccination should be deferred for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, whether or not they have symptoms, until they have met the criteria to discontinue their isolation. While mild illness is not a contraindication to flu vaccination, vaccination visits for these people should be postponed to avoid exposing healthcare personnel and other patients to the virus that causes COVID-19. When scheduling or confirming appointments for flu vaccination, patients should be instructed to notify the health care professional's office or clinic in advance if they currently have or develop any symptoms of COVID-19.



WHERE CAN I GET THE SHOT?

THE 2021/2022 IS WIDELY AVAILABLE NOW THROUGH MANY PROVIDERS; OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Major pharmacies such as CVS, Walgreens, Costco, ect
- Through your PCP or a MinuteClinic/ Urgent Care facility
- Kaiser patients are able to make clinic appointments
- You can 'find a vaccination' through [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)
- You can schedule a vaccination through [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://www.MyTurn.ca.gov)

Your Flu-Fighting Checklist



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? *AND KEY TAKE-AWAYS*

- Flu vaccination can help to keep you from getting sick with flu.
- Flu vaccination has been shown in several studies to reduce severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still get sick.
- Flu vaccination is an important preventive tool for people with certain chronic health conditions.
- Flu vaccination helps protect pregnant people during and after pregnancy.
- Flu vaccine can be lifesaving in children.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain chronic health conditions.
- The flu vaccine is one of the most effective ways to protect yourself and your community against the seasonal flu
- It is safe to receive the flu vaccine and Covid-19 vaccines/ boosters at the same time
- There are a few types of flu vaccines, speak with your provider about which one is best for you
- The flu vaccine for 2021-2022 is widely available to the public through many sites and providers
- If you have further questions, the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov) is a good, credible resource for up-to-date information