

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FLU VACCINE

Who should get the flu vaccine?

Anyone age 6 months or older should get the flu vaccine. The vaccine is especially important for people who have a higher risk of getting seriously ill from the flu, including people 65 and older; women who are pregnant; young children; and people with chronic health conditions such as heart or lung disease, asthma, and diabetes.

Why is it important to get the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is the first and most important step you can take to protect yourself against the flu. Getting the vaccine can prevent you from catching the flu, getting potentially very sick, being admitted to the hospital, or possibly even dying from complications.

What if I cannot afford the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is free to most Delawareans, even if you do not have insurance.

Where can I get the flu vaccine?

The vaccine is available throughout Delaware, from many different professionals and at many places, including health care provider offices, pharmacies (including grocery store pharmacies), Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) clinics, urgent care clinics, health centers, and more. Many employers and schools also offer the flu vaccine on-site. Visit flu.delaware.gov to find out where, when, and how you can get the flu vaccine, or talk to your HR department at work.

If I got a flu vaccine last year, why do I need one this year?

Getting the flu vaccine every year is the best approach to protecting your health. The flu virus changes, so each year, the vaccine you get protects you against the three to four flu types that researchers determine will be the most common.

Is the flu vaccine safe for me and my child?

Yes! For more than 50 years, people have been safely getting the flu vaccine — equating to millions of individuals. The vaccine is made under strict guidelines and supervision, and it is safe for people 6 months and older.

Is the flu vaccine safe if I am pregnant?

Yes! In fact, it is especially important for pregnant women to get the vaccine, because pregnancy can make them more likely to get sick. Plus, in addition to protecting the mom, the flu vaccine can also protect the baby for several months after birth.

The number of flu cases dropped last year. Does this mean the flu isn't as much of a health threat as it used to be?

No. The threat of the flu to your health is as strong as ever. The number of flu cases dropped last year because many people were following COVID-19 safety guidelines. With more Delawareans now interacting outside the home, more public events happening, and fewer people wearing masks, it is easier for the flu to spread. You can even get both your flu and COVID-19 vaccine on the same day.

Isn't it true the flu vaccine can make you sick?

No. You cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine. If you know someone who got sick immediately after getting the flu vaccine, it is likely they already had the virus in their system before getting the vaccine. It takes two weeks to build full immunity after getting the flu vaccine, so there is a short window of time during which some people may not be able to fight the virus.

I know people who got the flu a month or more after they got the vaccine. Why?

Because no vaccine is 100% effective at preventing a disease, it is possible someone can get the flu vaccine and still get the flu. However, in these instances, the person's symptoms are generally milder, and they miss fewer days of work or school.

Will I get side effects from the flu vaccine?

Not everyone experiences side effects, but if they do, they are very mild. These may include soreness/redness at the injection site, low-grade fever, or aches.

What else can I do to protect my loved ones and myself from the flu?

Stay home and try not to interact with others if you are sick — and avoid people you know are sick. Even if you feel fine, cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands often and clean frequently used surfaces, such as desktops and door handles.

Who should not get the flu vaccine?

Children under 6 months of age should not get a flu vaccine. Only in rare instances should a person over 6 months not get the vaccine. People with severe, life-threatening allergies to ingredients in the flu vaccine should not get it. People who are allergic to eggs or any of the ingredients in the vaccine, or who have a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome, should talk to their health care provider before getting the flu vaccine.

If I had an allergic reaction the last time I got a flu vaccine, shouldn't I avoid getting one again?

Not necessarily. You still may be able to get a flu vaccine that doesn't contain the ingredient that you may be allergic to. Talk to your health care provider to determine which type of flu vaccine is right for you.