



# FLU FACTS

Information on Influenza, the vaccine and how to stay healthy



## What Is The Flu?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each fall.

### Symptoms

- fever (usually high),
- headache,
- extreme tiredness,
- dry cough,
- sore throat,
- runny or stuffy nose, and
- muscle aches.
- Gastro-intestinal symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, are much more common among children than adults.

## Who Should Get Vaccinated?

Because of a shortfall in flu shot production for this season, CDC is recommending that certain people be given priority for getting the flu shot. People in the following groups should seek vaccination this season:

- all children aged 6–23 months;
- adults aged 65 years and older;
- persons aged 2–64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions;
- all women who will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities;
- children aged 6 months–18 years on chronic aspirin therapy;
- health-care workers involved in direct patient care;
- out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged less than 6 months.

These are people who are at high risk for serious flu complications or are in contact with people at high risk for serious flu complications.

People who are not included in one of the priority groups listed above are asked to forego or defer vaccination because of the vaccine supply situation.

## Who Should Not Be Vaccinated?

There are some people who should not be vaccinated. These include:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs.
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past.
- People who developed Guillain-Barre syndrome 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine previously.
- Children less than 6 months of age.
- People who are sick with a fever. (These people can get vaccinated once their symptoms lessen.)

## When To Get Vaccinated?

October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but you can still get vaccinated in December and later. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May.

## Good Health Habits

- **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.