

# Flu Vaccine Information

Stanford Medicine Children's Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also called the CDC, recommend that all eligible children 6 months of age or older get the flu vaccine every year. This handout will tell you more about the flu vaccine, also called the flu shot, and where you can find more information.

## Why should my child get a flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines are the best way to protect your child from getting the influenza virus, also called the flu. Also, children who still get the flu after getting a flu vaccine have less severe symptoms and complications.

## Who should get a flu vaccine?

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months or older get a flu vaccine each year unless there is a medical reason not to, such as a severe allergic reaction to a previous flu vaccine. Children between 6 months and 8 years old who have never gotten a flu vaccine before should get 2 doses of the flu vaccine at least four weeks apart. After that, they should get 1 dose every year.

If your child is sick, wait until they have no symptoms before getting them a flu vaccine.

## What are the symptoms of the flu?

Most children who get the flu have a fever, muscle aches, fatigue, and cold symptoms, including cough, which can last for several days. Unfortunately, some children also have more severe complications such as pneumonia, encephalitis, and death. Children with asthma, weakened immune systems, and other chronic conditions are more likely to have these more severe complications.

The best way to prevent these severe symptoms is getting a flu vaccine. Children who get the flu after getting a flu vaccine usually have milder symptoms and feel better sooner than children who did not get a flu vaccine that year.

## What are possible side effects of the vaccine?

Most side effects from the flu vaccine are mild. Some people may feel achy, tired, or have a mild fever for 1 to 2 days after they get the vaccine. **These symptoms are normal and do not mean your child has the flu. It is impossible to get the flu from the flu vaccine.**

Very rarely, a person may have an allergic reaction to the vaccine. An allergic reaction can cause symptoms such as rash, itching, trouble breathing or swallowing, or swelling. **If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a flu vaccine or its ingredients before, tell your care team before you get the vaccine.**

## Where can my child get a flu vaccine?

We recommend getting a flu vaccine at your pediatrician's office because they already know your child's medical history. Flu shots are offered by your Stanford Medicine Children's Health provider and at select clinic locations. For more information about where to get a flu vaccine, go to [flushots.stanfordchildrens.org](https://flushots.stanfordchildrens.org)

## Can my child still receive the flu vaccine if they are allergic to eggs?

Yes, your child can safely get the flu vaccine every year if they are allergic to eggs. You should still tell your child's care team about their egg allergy.

## What types of flu vaccine are available this year?

During the 2024–2025 influenza season, Stanford Medicine Children's Health clinics will be offering the flu shot only. They will give the vaccine in the arm, buttock, or thigh, depending on your child's age and size. The nasal spray version of the flu vaccine will not be offered at Stanford Medicine Children's Health clinics this year but may be available at PCHA clinics. If you are interested in the nasal spray version of the flu vaccine, please ask your provider if your child is eligible and if it is available.

## When is the best time to get a flu vaccine?

We recommend getting a flu vaccine in September or October because it will help protect your child through the entire flu season. However, if your child is not able to get the flu vaccine during this time, getting the flu vaccine any time between September and February will protect them during at least part of the flu season.

## Can my child get both the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time?

Yes, flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be given on the same day or at the same clinic visit. They will be given as 2 separate shots. To schedule a COVID-19 vaccine, please contact your primary care office or your local pharmacy. For more information on COVID-19 vaccines, go to the [CDC website](#).

## Should my child get a flu vaccine if they have a chronic illness?

Depending on your child's chronic illness, we may not recommend giving them a flu vaccine. For most people with chronic illness, it is still safe to get a flu vaccine. If your child has a chronic illness, please ask their care team if they recommend a flu vaccine. If you have other questions, please go to the [CDC website](#).

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Health Literacy Review: The Office of Patient/Family Education & Health Literacy