



Flu is a seasonal threat that can result in extended illness or hospitalization. Vaccination each flu season is the best way to protect adults and children from seasonal flu and its complications.

Yearly flu shots are [recommended by the CDC](#) for everyone six months of age and older. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses and prevent flu-related hospitalizations and death. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for full protection against the flu to take effect. **Get your flu vaccination by the end of October for best protection.**

- ▶ [More about getting a flu vaccination](#)
- ▶ [Who should get a flu shot](#)
- ▶ [Preventing flu](#)
- ▶ [Mississippi Flu Surveillance](#)
- ▶ [Healthcare Guidance](#)
- ▶ [Flu Information from the CDC](#)

Where to find a flu shot

Check with your health care provider about this season's flu shot. [County health departments](#) provide flu shots to all children, and to qualifying adults who lack insurance coverage. Flu shots are also widely available at pharmacies and retail centers. Find one near you by entering your zip code in the [Flu Shot Locator](#).

- ▶ [County health department locations](#)

Payment

MSDH accepts private insurance, Medicaid, CHIP, and Vaccines for Children (VFC) coverage. Cost under the VFC program is \$10.

- ▶ [Find an MSDH county health clinic](#)
- ▶ [Find other flu shot providers](#)

Who we vaccinate for flu

[MSDH county clinics](#) offer pediatric flu vaccinations for children up to age 18. Certain high-risk adults who lack health insurance coverage or who are underinsured can also receive their flu shots at county health departments.

Who should get a flu shot

Yearly flu shots are [recommended by the CDC](#) for everyone six months of age and older. Those particularly at risk for influenza complications include young children, adults 65 and older, pregnant women, and those with a chronic illness. Parents and caregivers of those who are at risk for flu should also receive a flu vaccination.

- **Young children:** Children, especially those six months through four years old, are more vulnerable to flu and its complications. It's especially important that children with underlying medical problems such as neuro-developmental or other disorders receive flu vaccination, since they can be at much higher risk of medical complications for death.

[Flu prevention for caregivers of infants and young children »](#)

The flu shot is not approved for use in children younger than 6 months of age.

- **Adults 50 and over:** People over the age of 50 are the largest group in the nation struck by serious or life-threatening cases of influenza. Older adults should also consider getting pneumonia shots. The pneumonia vaccination won't prevent pneumonia, but it can greatly reduce the severity and deadliness of pneumonia.
- **Anyone with a chronic illness:** Chronic disease such as diabetes, or a condition like HIV that weakens your immune system, can greatly increase the risk of getting the flu, having it longer, and suffering from more serious medical problems as a result of it. People with diabetes are almost three times more likely to die from flu complications.

[More about diabetes and flu »](#)

- **Pregnant women** or women who will be pregnant during the flu season: Pregnancy can change the immune system in the mother, making flu and flu complications more likely. Flu can pose a risk both to the mother and her developing child. Flu vaccination for the mother can also protect newborns from the flu while they are too young for flu vaccination themselves.

▶ [More on Flu and Pregnancy: CDC](#)

▶ [Facts on Flu and Pregnancy](#) PDF

▶ [The Role of the Provider](#) PDF

Flu for Two: All About Flu Sh...



Who should not get a flu shot

A flu shot is **not** recommended if you:

- Have a severe allergy to eggs
- Have had a severe reaction to a flu shot in the past
- Have had Guillain-Barré syndrome in the 6 weeks following a previous flu shot

Take 3: A three-part strategy to fight flu

1. Take time to get a flu vaccine each year

- Flu vaccination not only can help prevent the spread of flu, but more importantly, it can save lives. In the 2017-2018 flu season, an estimated 80,000 adults nationwide died from the flu, as well as 180 children. Three of those children were Mississippians.
- Each flu season brings new strains of flu that you need protection against. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations.
- Flu vaccine is available as traditional injections, nasal spray, and high-dose versions for older people. Whichever one you choose, be sure that you get it soon enough for a full season of protection – preferably before the end of October.
- Infants younger than six months of age aren't protected by flu vaccination. When you take steps to prevent to flu, you're helping protect them, too.

2. Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
- If you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. If you have flu symptoms, the CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

3. Take antivirals to treat your flu if your doctor prescribes them

- Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications, especially if you take them as soon as possible after symptoms appear.
- For those at high risk, antiviral drugs can mean the difference between having a milder illness or more a serious illness, hospitalization or death.
- Antiviral drugs are only available by prescription.
- Antiviral drugs can treat flu once you become ill, but they can't prevent flu. The flu vaccine has proven to be the best way to prevent the flu.

Preventing Flu in Schools

Guidance from MSDH and the CDC on preventing flu transmission in schools.

- ▶ [Key Points to Prevent the Spread of Flu in Schools](#)

Protective Hygiene

Clean your hands



Clean hands prevent the spread of flu virus. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly to stay healthy.

One of the most common ways to catch the flu is by touching the eyes or nose with contaminated hands. Handwashing prevents the spread of other communicable diseases as

well: hepatitis A, meningitis, and infectious diarrhea among others.

Effective handwashing:

- Wet your hands and apply liquid or clean bar soap.
- Rub your hands vigorously together and scrub thoroughly past your wrists.
- Continue for 10-15 seconds — about the time it takes to read these instructions. Soap combined with scrubbing acts to remove germs.
- Rinse well and dry your hands.
- [More about handwashing](#)



It's In Your Hands

- ▶ [Handwashing basics for kids and materials for teachers](#)

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

The flu virus easily enters the body when you touch a contaminated surface and transfer the virus to the eyes, nose, or mouth.

Stay home when you are sick

You are more likely to catch the flu if you are already sick with a cold or other illness. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick to keep yourself and others well.

If you are sick, continue to follow the handwashing guidelines above.

Cover your mouth and nose



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent the spread of any illness to others.

Wash your hands after using a tissue.

Avoid close contact

Flu spreads easily: avoid close contact with those who are ill. If you are sick, avoid contact with others to keep them well.

How can I tell a cold from the flu?

The flu's symptoms come on suddenly and can include a high fever and severe aches and pains. A cold, however, rarely causes a fever or severe aches and pains.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
<i>Fever</i>	Usually none	High fever (102 - 104° F); lasts 3 to 4 days
<i>Headache</i>	Usually none	Headaches can be strong
<i>General aches, pains</i>	Very little	Often severe aches and pains
<i>Fatigue, weakness</i>	Mild	Fatigue for up to 3 weeks
<i>Extreme exhaustion</i>	Never	Exhaustion begins early and remains
<i>Stuffy nose</i>	Nose usually stuffy	Sometimes
<i>Sneezing</i>	Sneezing is common	Sometimes
<i>Sore throat</i>	Throat is usually sore	Sometimes
<i>Chest discomfort, cough</i>	Sometimes	Chest discomfort and coughing can be severe
Complications	Sinus congestion or earache	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening
Prevention	None	Annual vaccination or antiviral medicines; see your doctor
Treatment	Only temporary relief of symptoms	Antiviral medicines: see your doctor

Links referenced

recommended by the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Mississippi Flu Surveillance <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/14,0,199,230,html>

Healthcare <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/14,20981,199,822,html>

Guidance

Flu <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Information
from the CDC

County health <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/19,0,166,html>
departments

Flu Shot <https://vaccinefinder.org/>
Locator.

County health <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/19,0,166,html>
department
locations

Find an MSDH <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/19,0,166,html>
county health
clinic

Find other flu <https://vaccinefinder.org/>
shot providers

MSDH county <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/19,0,166,html>
clinics

recommended <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/prevention.htm>
by the CDC

Flu prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/infantcare.htm>
for caregivers
of infants and
young
children »

More about <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/diabetes.htm>
diabetes and
flu »

More on Flu <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/pregnant.htm>
and
Pregnancy:
CDC

Facts on Flu <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/31,5195,299,pdf/FluBriefForWomen.pdf>
and
Pregnancy

The Role of <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/31,5196,299,pdf/FluBriefForProviders.pdf>
the Provider

Key Points to <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/14,0,199,818,html>
Prevent the
Spread of Flu
in Schools

Handwashing <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/14,6459,330,html>

basics for kids
and materials
for teachers

Find this page at <http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/index.cfm/index.cfm>

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