

Q. Why should I get the flu vaccine this fall?

A. Getting the flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu and reduce the risk of problems if you do get sick.¹ If you get the flu:

- You feel awful.
- You miss out on work.
- You can't do fun things with family and friends.
- You might get other people sick.

Any flu can be dangerous. Some are more deadly than others.

You might recover after just a few days at home. Other people might not be so lucky. The flu can be very serious for people who have a weak immune system, older people, and small children. The flu vaccine is a simple way to avoid getting sick, going to the hospital, or maybe even worse.

Fight the flu: The power of prevention

Last year, about 40 percent of people in the United States received the flu vaccine.² And it helped prevent about:

- 7 million flu illnesses
- 109,000 flu hospitalizations
- 8,000 flu deaths

Most people did not get the flu vaccine, and that left a lot of people unprotected. Last flu season, there were:

- 49 million flu illnesses
- 960,000 flu hospitalizations
- 79,000 flu deaths

If you're on the fence about getting the flu vaccine, think about it like this: One microscopic droplet of the flu virus can make you sick... really sick.



Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Muscle and body aches
- Chills and sweats
- Cough
- Headache
- Fatigue and weakness
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Vomiting and diarrhea

Chances are pretty good you have better things to do than lay in bed feeling miserable for a few days or a few weeks. Right?

Get the flu vaccine to protect your health. Early fall, before the flu hits your area, is the best time to do it. It takes a few weeks for your body to build immunities from the vaccine and you want to be ready when flu season hits later in the year.

Note: Most people should get the flu vaccine. However, children younger than 6 months old should not. If you have an allergy to eggs or a weakened immune system, check with your doctor about flu vaccine options.

Vaccine + lifestyle habits to prevent the flu

Getting the flu vaccine is an easy and inexpensive way to protect your health and avoid the flu. In addition to the

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

vaccine, here are some things you can do to prevent the flu:

- Wash your hands with soap and water often. Lather up. Scrub hands for about 20 seconds. Rinse, and dry with paper towels.
- Avoid close contact with anyone with the flu. If you're sick, stay away from people. Your co-workers and friends don't want the flu. Neither do random people at a store. Stay home and try to isolate yourself from family members.
- Use disinfectant spray on surfaces that your hands might touch. That includes door handles, remote control, light switches, keyboards, phones, and countertops.
- Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep. Sleep helps strengthen your immune system to fight the flu.
- Exercise and eat healthy foods. Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of exercise per day. And eat healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds and legumes.

If you want to avoid the flu this season, get the flu vaccine. It's your best defense to stay healthy during flu season.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). What are the benefits of flu vaccination? From: <https://tinyurl.com/y4lmgfgr>

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Estimated influenza illnesses, medical visits, and hospitalizations averted by vaccination. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y4hanc6h>

