

It's cold and flu season.

Why should I get a flu shot?

- + Why are health care providers emphasizing the importance of influenza (flu) vaccine during the COVID-19 pandemic?**
 - Symptoms of COVID-19 and influenza (flu) are similar. Both can cause respiratory complications, including pneumonia. During the upcoming flu season, it is important to get your flu shot to reduce your overall risk of respiratory illness during flu season. The flu shot can decrease your risk of contracting the flu or the severity of flu symptoms if you do get ill. This may decrease your need for medical services, including emergency care and hospitalizations due to flu-related symptoms and/or complications during a time when health care resource availability might be strained due to the pandemic.

- + Is it possible to be infected with COVID-19 and influenza (flu) at the same time?**
 - Yes, you can be infected with both COVID-19 and influenza at the same time.

- + Will getting the flu vaccine increase the risk of contracting COVID-19?**
 - No. There is no evidence that the flu vaccine increases COVID-19 risk.

- + Will getting the flu vaccine provide protection from contracting COVID-19?**
 - No. The flu vaccine will not protect you against COVID-19, however a flu vaccination is more important than ever this fall to not only reduce your risk from the flu but also to help conserve potentially scarce health care resources.

- + Should a flu shot be administered to someone who has recently been diagnosed with COVID-19?**
 - No. If someone has recently been diagnosed with COVID-19, the flu shot should be postponed until the person has completed the period of isolation. Once the following criteria are met, an appointment can be scheduled and the flu vaccine may be administered.
 - The person must have:
 1. Completed a 10-day isolation period starting from the date that the first symptoms appeared (for symptomatic patients) or starting from the date that the COVID-19 test was collected (for patients who have no symptoms).
 2. Have no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
 3. Have an improvement in symptoms
 - Strict isolation is necessary following a diagnosis of COVID-19 to decrease the risk of infecting health care personnel and other patients.



+ Are there certain people in which there is a higher importance of getting the flu vaccine this season?

- Getting an annual flu shot is very important for anyone who is 6 months of age and older because it can:
 1. Decrease the risk of contracting the flu
 2. Decrease the severity and duration of symptoms in those who do get the flu
 3. Decrease the risk of severe illness requiring medical care and hospitalizations
 4. Decrease the overall burden of respiratory illness on the health care system
 5. Protect vulnerable populations

+ It is very important for the following individuals to get their flu shot:

- Health care workers
- Essential workers
- Individuals who interact with the public
- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities and nursing homes
- Infants 6 months of age and older and young children
- Children with neurological conditions
- Pregnant women
- Individuals with underlying medical conditions (these conditions can increase the risk of flu-related complications):
 - Asthma
 - Cancer or cancer treatment
 - Chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD)
 - Cystic Fibrosis
 - Diabetes
 - Kidney or liver disease
 - Heart disease
 - Obesity
 - HIV / AIDS

+ What is the best time to get the flu shot this year?

- Health care providers are recommending that patients 6 months of age and older get the flu shot as early as possible this year. Flu and COVID-19 have several symptoms in common including respiratory symptoms. Being infected with both at the same time or having back-to-back infections could result in severe and/or prolonged illness.

+ When is flu season?

- In our region, flu season is typically October through May.



+ How long does it take the flu shot to take effect?

- It takes up to 2 weeks for your body to generate antibodies against the flu and build immunity.

+ When will flu shots be available?

- Flu vaccine distribution to health care facilities typically begins in late August to early September. Many clinics and pharmacies are now offering flu shots in this area

+ I'm an Auburn employee. How can I get a flu shot?

- The Auburn University Pharmaceutical Care Center is providing flu shots for AU employees and dependents (for children 12 years of age and older). Please call 334-844-4099 to schedule a flu vaccine appointment.

