

What to Know about 2026–27 Flu Vaccines



What is the flu?

The flu, also called influenza, is a contagious respiratory illness. It is caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu symptoms can range from mild to severe and include fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, chills, nausea, runny or stuffy nose, and head and body aches. The flu spreads at a high rate between October and May: the time of year often called flu season or respiratory virus season.

How can I protect myself and my loved ones from the flu?

Each year, new flu variants emerge, and scientists work to develop a flu vaccine that offers the best possible protection against these new strains. Getting the updated flu vaccine remains the best way to prevent severe flu symptoms, hospitalization, and death.

Where can I get the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is available at pharmacies, health clinics, and doctors' offices. People can typically book a vaccine appointment in advance, or some clinics and pharmacies allow walk-ins without an appointment.

FluMist, a self-administered nasal spray flu vaccine, is available for online order and home delivery. FluMist is FDA-approved for home use by adults ages 18 to 49 years. Caregivers of children can also administer FluMist to children ages 2 to 17 years. It is not recommended for pregnant people, people with compromised immune systems, or people with certain underlying health conditions.

Nearly all public and private insurance plans fully cover the flu vaccine, making it free as part of preventative care. For adults who do not have insurance, free or low-cost flu vaccine options may be available. Talk to a local pharmacist or a healthcare professional, or check with a local health department about free or low-cost options.

2026-27 Recommendations to Protect Against Flu

Adults	The <u>American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)</u> recommends that all adults get a flu vaccine to protect against severe infection. <u>People who live with or care for children</u> , especially those younger than 6 months, should get a flu vaccine to help protect this high-risk group.
Children	The <u>American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)</u> recommends that all children ages 6 months and older get a flu vaccine to protect against severe infection. <u>Children between the ages of 6 months and 8 years</u> should get two doses of the flu vaccine if this is their first time being vaccinated against the flu or if they have only ever received one dose. They should get the second dose four weeks after the first.
Pregnant People	<u>People who are pregnant</u> should get a flu vaccine to protect themselves and their babies from the flu. Pregnant people can get the flu vaccine at any time during their pregnancy, but it is best to get the vaccine early in the flu season, which runs from October through May.
Immunocompromised	The <u>Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)</u> recommends a flu vaccine for everyone with a compromised immune system ages 6 months and older.

SOURCES: 2026-27 respiratory virus immunization content is informed by recommendations from the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA).