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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE 2021-2022 FLU VACCINE

The arrival of winter signals many things, including the peak of influenza (flu) season. The flu season usually begins in October and peaks between December and February.

This article highlights changes for the current flu season and flu vaccine [frequently asked questions](#) (FAQs) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the time of publication.

The 2021-2022 Flu Season

A few things are different for the 2021-2022 flu season, including the following:

- The [composition of flu vaccines](#) has been updated.
- All flu vaccines will be [quadrivalent](#) (four-component), designed to protect against four different flu viruses.
- Licensure on one flu vaccine has changed. Flucevax Quadrivalent is now approved for people 2 years of age and older. Different vaccines are approved for different age groups.
- Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time.
- More detailed guidance about the recommended timing of flu vaccination for some groups of people is available.
- Guidance concerning contraindications and

precautions for the use of two flu vaccines (Flucevax Quadrivalent and Flublok Quadrivalent) were updated.

- There were some [changes](#) to the CDC's flu surveillance systems.

Flu Vaccine FAQs

What is the CDC's recommendation for getting a flu vaccine for the 2021-2022 flu season?

Annual flu vaccination is recommended for everyone six months and older, with [few exceptions](#).

What viruses will the 2021-2022 flu vaccines protect against?

There are many different flu viruses, and they are constantly changing. The composition of U.S. flu vaccines is reviewed annually and updated as needed to match circulating flu viruses. This season, all flu vaccines will be designed to protect against the four viruses that research indicates will be most common.

For 2021-2022, recommendations were made for egg-based, cell-based and recombinant flu vaccines. These recommendations include two updates compared with 2020-2021 U.S. flu vaccines. The influenza A(H1N1) and the influenza A(H3N2) vaccine virus components were updated. Compared with the Southern



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Hemisphere flu vaccine recommendation, this recommendation represents one update, and that is to the influenza A(H3N2) component.

To learn more about flu vaccine composition, [visit the Food and Drug Administration's website](#).

Will this season's flu season vaccine match be affected by the low levels of flu virus activity last season?

Flu viruses constantly change and, based on the available data on how flu viruses are currently changing, CDC flu experts anticipate that the flu viruses that circulate this season may have small changes compared to each of the four major virus components used in the vaccine. Despite these changes, the flu vaccine is still expected to provide good protection for the majority of flu viruses that are likely to circulate in the United States during the current flu season.

What should someone 65 or older who is having trouble finding high-dose or adjuvanted flu vaccines do?

Several flu vaccine formulations are approved for use in people 65 and older, including two enhanced flu vaccines: the high-dose flu vaccine and the adjuvanted flu vaccine. Both vaccines are designed to create a stronger immune response in people 65 years and older.

The CDC doesn't have a preferential recommendation for any flu vaccine, and vaccination shouldn't be delayed for a specific vaccine product when another vaccine licensed for use in people ages 65 and older is available.

What if my vaccine provider doesn't have my preferred flu vaccine?

The CDC recommends the use of any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine during the 2021-2022 flu season, including [inactivated flu vaccine](#), [high-dose flu vaccine](#), [adjuvanted flu vaccine](#), [recombinant flu vaccine](#) and [nasal spray flu vaccine](#). Vaccination shouldn't be delayed for a specific vaccine product when another age-appropriate vaccine is available.

What is the CDC doing to promote flu vaccination for the 2021-2022 flu season?

The CDC has annual educational campaigns to increase awareness about the importance of seasonal flu vaccination. For the 2021-2022 season, the CDC will continue to emphasize the importance of flu vaccination

the entire flu season. The agency will conduct targeted communication outreach to groups of people at higher risk for developing serious complications from flu.

I don't have a primary care provider. Where can I get a flu vaccine?

If you don't have a health care professional you regularly see, you can find flu vaccines at many places, including health departments and pharmacies.

When is the best time to get my influenza vaccine?

It's best to be vaccinated before the flu begins spreading in your community. Ideally, flu vaccination is recommended by the end of October. However, even if you haven't been vaccinated as of November or later, vaccination is still recommended because flu most commonly peaks in February and significant activity can continue into May.

Additional considerations concerning the timing of vaccination for certain groups, including adults 65 years and older, children and pregnant people. [Click here](#) to learn more about the new recommendations.

Get Vaccinated

The CDC recommends that anyone over the age of six months get a flu shot every year. While some people who get a flu vaccine may still get sick, flu vaccination has been shown to reduce the severity of illness.

Source: CDC