



AUSTIN BENEFITS GROUP WELLNESS IN FOCUS

Preparing for the
2025-26 Flu Season



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While influenza (flu) illnesses and hospitalizations surged last year, experts predict that the United States may experience a moderately active season this year. When colder weather arrives, flu rates typically increase, peaking between December and February.

This article previews the 2025-26 flu season and provides information about this year's flu vaccine.

The 2025-26 Flu Season

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts that the 2025-26 flu season will likely be moderate in terms of how many people end up in the hospital. That means it likely won't be as bad as last year, but it's still something to take seriously. The agency is basing this prediction on past flu seasons and expert opinions.

The 2024-25 flu season was the worst since 2017-18. Thousands of Americans of all ages got sick, and hospitalization numbers were high.

High-severity seasons are less common than moderate-severity seasons and have not occurred back-to-back since the CDC began assessing seasonal severity during the 2003- 2004 season. However, it remains possible that the flu season will be of high severity in one or more age groups this year.

The CDC emphasizes that getting vaccinated is one of the best ways to stay out of the hospital during this year's flu season. Flu vaccines prevented an estimated 240,000 hospitalizations during the 2024-25 season, primarily in adults aged 65 years and older. It is uncertain how vaccination uptake and vaccine effectiveness will change this season compared to past seasons.

Flu Vaccine FAQs

What Are the CDC's Recommendations for Getting a Flu Vaccine for the 2025-26 Flu Season?

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months or older, with rare exceptions, get a flu vaccine. For those 65 years or older, the agency also recommends using higher-dose flu vaccines or adjuvanted flu vaccines over standard-dose unadjuvanted flu vaccines.



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However, if one of the preferentially recommended flu vaccines for people 65 and older is unavailable at the time of administration, the agency recommends that people in this age group get a standard-dose flu vaccine instead.

When Should I Get a Flu Vaccine?

The recommendation for the timing of receiving the 2025-26 flu vaccine is similar to last season. The CDC states it's ideal for everyone who does not have a contraindication to be vaccinated by the end of October, but vaccination after October can still provide protection during the peak of flu season. The best time for you to be vaccinated may depend on certain factors, such as age or if you're pregnant.

What Viruses Will the 2025-26 Vaccines Protect Against?

There are several flu variants, and they can change and morph as the flu season progresses. The vaccines are created each flu season to combat the flu viruses that research indicates will be the most common.

Most recommendations have remained unchanged from the 2024-25 flu season, including timing of vaccination, selection of vaccines and precautions. Updated 2025-26 flu vaccines are trivalent and guard against three virus subtypes: A(H1N1), A(H3N2) and a Victoria lineage influenza B virus. The composition of this season's vaccine compared to last has been updated with a new influenza A(H3N2) virus.

Although you may still catch the flu if you receive a vaccine, immunization has been proven to reduce the severity of illness. The type of vaccine an individual needs depends on age and risk level. Speak to a doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional if you have questions about which flu shot is best for you.

What If I Have Egg Allergies?

Typically, flu vaccines are produced using an egg-based manufacturing process and contain a small amount of egg proteins. However, the 2025-26 flu vaccine is available in egg-free formulations. That said, the CDC noted that people with an egg allergy are not at "increased risk" of severe allergic reactions to egg-based flu vaccines, so it's appropriate to receive any flu vaccine—egg-based or non-egg-based.

Summary

During this flu season, vaccination and other preventive measures can help minimize the risk of the flu for you and those around you. Other ways to stay healthy include staying home if you are sick, washing your hands frequently and maintaining a healthy diet.

Contact your physician with any questions regarding flu vaccination, and [check out more information](#) about flu season from the CDC. Its website will continue to be updated as the season progresses.