



What You Should Know for the 2014 - 2015 Flu Season

What sort of flu season is expected this year?

It's not possible to predict what this flu season will be like. Flu seasons are unpredictable in a number of ways. While flu spreads every year, the timing, severity, and length of the season varies from one year to another.

What should I do to prepare for this flu season?

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine is designed to protect against the top three or four flu viruses that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season. Medical providers should be vaccinated and begin vaccinating patients soon after flu vaccine becomes available, ideally by October, to ensure that as many people as possible are protected before flu season begins.

When can I begin vaccinating patients with flu vaccine?

Doctors and nurses should begin vaccinating against flu as soon as the vaccine becomes available. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu. Children aged 6 months through 8 years who need two doses of vaccine should receive the first dose as soon as possible to allow time to get the second dose before the start of flu season.

The two doses should be given at least 4 weeks apart.

How much flu vaccine will be available this season?

Flu vaccine is produced by private manufacturers, so supply depends on manufacturers. For this season, manufacturers have projected they will provide between 153-158 million doses of vaccine for the U.S. market.

What kind of vaccines will be available in the United States for 2014-2015?

A number of different manufacturers produce trivalent (three component) influenza vaccines for the U.S. market, including intramuscular (IM), intradermal, and nasal spray vaccines. Some seasonal flu vaccines will be formulated to protect against four flu viruses (quadrivalent flu vaccines) and will be available as well according to manufacturers. See [Key Facts About Seasonal Flu Vaccine](#) and [How Flu Vaccines Are Made](#) for more information.

Are there new recommendations for the 2014-2015 influenza season?

Recommendations on the control and prevention of influenza are published annually, in late summer or early fall. Existing recommendations are available at Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Resources for Health Professionals. New recommendations for the 2014-2015 season are available on the [CDC website](#).

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Starting in 2014-2015, CDC recommends use of the nasal spray vaccine (LAIV) in healthy children 2 to 8 years of age, when it is immediately available and if the child has no contraindications or precautions to that vaccine. Recent studies suggest that the nasal spray flu vaccine may work better than the flu shot in younger children. However, if the nasal spray vaccine is not immediately available and the flu shot is, children age 2 to 8 years should get the flu shot. Don't delay vaccination to find the nasal spray flu vaccine. For more information about the new CDC recommendation, see [Nasal Spray Flu Vaccine in Children 2-8 Years Old](#) or the [2014-2015 MMWR Influenza Vaccine Recommendations](#). Visit [What's New on this Site](#) to sign up and receive updates from the CDC Influenza site.

Is it possible to get the flu after being vaccinated?

Yes. It's possible to get sick with the flu even if you have been vaccinated (although you won't know for sure unless you get a flu test). This is possible for the following reasons:

- You may be exposed to a flu virus shortly before getting vaccinated or during the period that it takes the body to gain protection after getting vaccinated. This exposure may result in you becoming ill with flu before the vaccine begins to protect you. (About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection develop in the body.)
- You may be exposed to a flu virus that is not included in the seasonal flu vaccine. There are many different flu viruses that circulate every year. The flu

vaccine is made to protect against the three or four flu viruses that research suggests will be most common.

- Unfortunately, some people can become infected with a flu virus the flu vaccine is designed to protect against, despite getting vaccinated. Protection provided by flu vaccination can vary widely, based in part on health and age factors of the person getting vaccinated. In general, the flu vaccine works best among healthy younger adults and older children. Some older people and people with certain chronic illnesses may develop less immunity after vaccination. Flu vaccination is not a perfect tool, but it is the best way to protect against flu infection.

What type of flu vaccine is being offered by the Maine Immunization Program?

The Maine Immunization Program has purchased all quadrivalent flu vaccine for the 2014-15 flu season. The quadrivalent flu vaccine is designed to protect against four different flu viruses; two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses. The vaccine consists of the following four viruses:

- an A/California/7/2009(H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A(H3N2)virus antigenically like the cell-propagated prototype virus A/Victoria/361/2011;
- A B/Massachusetts/2/2012-like virus;
- A B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus

Why vaccinate against flu?

Each year **thousands of people in the United States die from flu**, and many more are hospitalized.

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Flu vaccine is the best protection against flu and its complications. Flu vaccine also helps prevent spreading flu from person to person.

Anyone can get flu, but the risk of getting flu is highest among children. Symptoms come on suddenly and may last several days. They can include:

- fever/chills
- sore throat
- muscle aches
- fatigue
- cough
- headache
- runny or stuffy nose

Flu can make some people much sicker than others. These people include young children, people 65 and older, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions — such as heart, lung or kidney disease, nervous system disorders, or a weakened immune system. Flu vaccination is especially important for these people, and anyone in close contact with them.

Flu can also lead to pneumonia, and make existing medical conditions worse. It can cause diarrhea and seizures in children.

What are the risks to receiving the flu vaccine?

With a vaccine, like any medicine, there is a chance of side effects. These are usually mild and go away on their own.

Problems that could happen after any vaccine:

Brief fainting spells can happen after any medical procedure, including vaccination. Sitting or lying down for about 15 minutes can help prevent fainting, and

injuries caused by a fall. Tell your patients to report to you if they feel dizzy, or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

Severe shoulder pain and reduced range of motion in the arm where a shot was given can happen, very rarely, after a vaccination.

Severe allergic reactions from a vaccine are very rare, estimated at less than 1 in a million doses. If one were to occur, it would usually be within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

Basic Materials

New! [What You Should Know for the 2014-2015 Influenza Season](#)

Updated! [Inactivated Flu Vaccine: Vaccination Information Statement \(VIS\)](#)

Updated! [Live, Intranasal Flu Vaccine: Vaccination Information Statement \(VIS\)](#)

New! [Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\) — United States, 2014–15 Influenza Season, MMWR 2014, August 15, 2014 / 63\(32\):691-697](#)

New! [Table of Approved Influenza Vaccines for the U.S. 2014-2015 Season](#)

Print Materials

This season's flu materials include messaging to address flu recommendations. All materials are **free for download**. They may be printed on a standard office printer, or you may use a commercial printer. Click on an audience for products in different sizes, formats, and languages. [Order free copies](#) of select materials. (Order limits apply. Allow ample time for shipping.)

**If you have any questions, please contact the Maine Immunization Program at:
Phone (207) 287-3746 or (800) 867-4775**

