



MASSACHUSETTS

YOUR TOP FLU QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Flu is nothing to sneeze at. And members like you have lots of questions: Is the flu shot safe? Can I get the flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time? We've pulled together answers for these questions, and more, to keep you and your loved ones safer this season.

FLU FAQ

Who should get the flu shot?

Just about everyone six months and older, most importantly those who are at high risk of developing complications if they get the flu, such as:

- Adults 65 years and older
- Children younger than two years old
- Adults with chronic health conditions, such as asthma, lung disease, heart disease, and diabetes
- Those who are pregnant or are up to two weeks postpartum
- Certain racial and ethnic minority groups, including Black, Hispanic or Latino persons, and American Indian or Alaska Native persons
- People who live in nursing homes and long-term care facilities

For a complete list, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

I have a health condition. Is a flu shot safe for me?

The flu shot is safe¹ for most people. However, you should talk to your primary care provider (PCP) before getting the flu shot if you or a family member:

- Have an allergy to eggs, or any other ingredient in the vaccine
- Have had Guillain-Barré syndrome
- Aren't feeling well, or have a fever

If you've tested positive for COVID-19, you should postpone getting the flu shot until you've met the criteria indicating that you're no longer required to isolate. This will avoid exposing health care personnel and other patients to the virus.

When should I get my flu shot?

The CDC recommends getting a flu shot by the end of October, before the virus spreads. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body to build up protection against the flu, so the sooner you get your shot, the better. But any time is better than not at all. The vaccine is offered throughout the flu season, which peaks between December and February, but can last all the way through May. It's never too late to get your shot.

Learn More

Learn more about the flu, and the flu shot, at bluecrossma.org/flu.

1. CDC, "Influenza (Flu) Vaccine Safety," August 25, 2022; [cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinesafety.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinesafety.htm).

How is the flu vaccine administered?

The most common way to receive the vaccine is by getting a shot. The way you receive the vaccine and the dose you get will vary depending on what your primary care provider recommends. Learn more at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), and talk to your PCP or pharmacist about what's right for you and your family.

Does my child need two doses of the flu shot?

Possibly. It's not unusual for some children ages six months to eight years to require two doses. Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) to learn whether your child needs more than one shot — and be sure to talk to your PCP before your child gets vaccinated.

Colds, flu, and COVID-19 have some similar symptoms. How do I know which one I have?

If you experience symptoms like a fever of 102°F – 104°F, shortness of breath, muscle pain, or body aches, contact your PCP for guidance. Even colds come with symptoms like chest congestion, coughing, and fever. When in doubt, contact your PCP. In any case, it's best to visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and follow the CDC's safety guidelines for both flu and COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of flu and coronavirus to your family, friends, or community.

Can I have the flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

Yes, and each can make the other worse. It makes good sense to get your flu shot and take extra precautions to prevent transmission. The CDC says that it's safe, effective, and can be given at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine,² and other vaccines. Learn more about flu and COVID-19 at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Does it matter which flu shot I take?

The CDC doesn't recommend one flu vaccine over another. It's more important for everyone six months and older to get the flu vaccine as soon as they can. If you have questions about which flu vaccine to get, ask your PCP.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET THE FLU?



Seek treatment

If you're pregnant or at high risk of flu complications and have been exposed to the flu or have symptoms, seek medical help right away. Otherwise, call your primary care provider about treatment options. Your PCP may want to treat you over the phone so you avoid contact with others.



Wash your hands

A lot. With soap and water. If those aren't available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Cover your mouth and nose

Every time you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or the inside of your elbow to avoid spreading germs. You should also consider wearing a mask if you leave your home.



Keep it clean

Sanitize commonly used surfaces and items that may be contaminated with flu germs, such as doorknobs, remote controls, and your phone.



Don't expose others

Make sure you're fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to work or other shared activities.



Talk to Team Blue

Call our 24/7 Nurse Line at **1-888-247-BLUE (2583)** to talk to a registered nurse, at no additional cost. We'll guide you through your next steps for care.

2. CDC, "Getting a Flu Vaccine and a COVID-19 Vaccine at the Same Time," October 25, 2022; [cdc.gov/flu/prevent/coadministration.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/coadministration.htm).

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ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia con el idioma. Llame al número de Servicio al Cliente que figura en su tarjeta de identificación (TTY: 711).

ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, são-lhe disponibilizados gratuitamente serviços de assistência de idiomas. Telefone para os Serviços aos Membros, através do número no seu cartão ID (TTY: 711).