



MASSACHUSETTS

YOUR TOP FLU QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Now more than ever, flu is nothing to sneeze at. And members like you have lots of questions. Who should get the shot? Do kids need more than one? Is it safe to get during the pandemic? We've pulled together answers for these, and more, to keep you safer this season.

FLU FAQs

WHO SHOULD GET THE FLU SHOT?

Just about everyone 6 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
- Adults with chronic health conditions, such as asthma, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, chronic kidney disease
- Children younger than two years old
- Pregnant women, and women up to two weeks after the end of pregnancy
- Certain racial and ethnic minority groups, including non-Hispanic Black persons, Hispanic or Latino persons, and American Indian or Alaska Native persons
- People who live in nursing homes and long-term care facilities

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

I HAVE A HEALTH CONDITION. IS A FLU SHOT SAFE FOR ME?

Talk to your doctor before getting the flu shot if you or a family member have a health condition, most importantly any of the following:

- Have an allergy to eggs, or any other ingredient in the vaccine
- Have had Guillain-Barré syndrome in the past
- Are currently ill with a fever
- Are suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19
 - You should postpone vaccination 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 COVID-19 virus.

WHEN SHOULD I GET MY SHOT?

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

Learn More

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

HOW IS THE FLU VACCINATION 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 provider recommends. Learn more at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), and talk to your doctor 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 more about whether your child needs more than one shot — and be sure to talk to your doctor 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 fever of 102–104°F, shortness of breath, muscle pain, and body aches, contact your doctor for guidance. Even colds come with symptoms like chest congestion, coughing, and fever. When in doubt, contact your doctor. 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. There is still much being learned about the risks of having both viruses at the same time, or how common this is. In the meantime, it makes good sense to get your flu shot and take extra precautions to prevent transmission. Visit our Coronavirus Resource Center at [bluecrossma.org](https://www.bluecrossma.org) for support and help. The CDC also has helpful information about flu and coronavirus at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET THE FLU?



Seek prompt medical attention

If you're pregnant or in a high-risk group, seek medical help right away when you've been exposed to the flu or have developed symptoms.



Call your doctor

Talk to your doctor about treatment options, especially if you have a high risk of flu complications or are very sick. Your doctor may want to treat you over the phone, so that you can stay home and 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 when doing so. Here's a hack if you don't have tissue: cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow to avoid spreading germs. And be sure to wear a mask.



Keep it clean

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



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. They'll guide you through your next steps for care.



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ATTENTION: If you don't speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call Member Service at the number on your ID card (TTY: 711).

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).