



NMCPHC QUICK HITS

Flu Season Is Coming

With so many misconceptions regarding influenza (flu) and the vaccine, it can be hard to find the right information. We've answered the most common questions to help you prepare for the upcoming flu season.

Can the flu vaccine give me flu?

No. The flu vaccine contains an inactive virus, therefore it cannot give you the flu.

Can I still get sick with flu if I've received the flu vaccine?

Yes. There are several reasons for this:

- It takes two weeks for your body to produce enough [antibodies](#) to protect you against flu after receiving the vaccine. If you are exposed to a flu virus during those two weeks or right before you get the flu vaccine, your body is not fully prepared to protect you.
- The flu vaccine only protects against three to four types of flu viruses. If you are exposed to a flu virus that is not included in the seasonal vaccine, you may not be protected.
- The flu vaccine is not a perfect tool, but it is the best way to protect yourself against flu. Overall health and age are factors in vaccine effectiveness.



(U.S. Navy photo by PO1 Jacob Sippel)

Who should get the flu vaccine?

Different vaccines are approved for different ages, but everyone six months of age and older should be vaccinated. Flu shots are also recommended for pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions. If you have an allergy to eggs or any of the ingredients in the vaccine you should consult your doctor first.

How do you know if you have the flu?

Most people who become infected with the flu virus may only miss a few days of work, while serious cases can result in hospitalization, and even death. The most common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Feeling weak or more tired than usual
- Headache
- Chills
- Body aches

Your doctor can prescribe antiviral medicine if you test positive for flu virus to minimize your flu symptoms.

How can I prevent myself from getting the flu and spreading it?

Flu viruses can [spread](#) when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks around others, even as far as six feet away. Limit your contact with those who are infected, do not touch your face and wash your hands with soap and warm water often (or hand sanitizer if needed). You should also disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with the virus. If you do get the flu, stay home at least 24 hours once you no longer have a fever. Limit contact with others. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then wash your hands immediately. Use [medication](#) the way your doctor recommends. Wear a mask to help stop the spread of germs.

Additional Resources

- Click [here](#) for more flu virus resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Talk to your primary care provider about getting your flu vaccine.

