



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Act Now, Get Vaccinated to Protect Against Flu

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services encourages all North Carolina residents to get vaccinated against the flu to protect themselves and those around them.

Getting a flu vaccination is more important than ever as we enter the 2020-21 flu season amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination against the flu for everyone 6 months and older with any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine. Vaccination is the best way to prevent infection with the flu.

For those who get the flu, vaccination can also make illness milder, making it especially important for those at higher risk of more serious outcomes. This includes people over 65 years of age, children younger than 5, pregnant women and those with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

Flu vaccines are available at hospitals, pharmacies, private medical offices, local health departments and some federally qualified health care centers. To find a flu vaccine near you, visit [vaccinefinder.org](https://www.vaccinefinder.org).

In addition to getting a flu vaccine, everyone should practice the following essential precautions to protect against the spread of flu, COVID-19, and other viruses:

- Continue to [practice the 3Ws](#).
 - Wear a cloth mask over your nose and mouth when in public spaces.
 - Wait 6 feet apart and avoid close contact with people outside your household.
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and water and use an approved hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethyl alcohol content.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then discard the tissue promptly.
- Stay home when sick until fever-free for at least 24 hours, except for COVID-19. Follow CDC guidance for [ending isolation](#) for COVID-19.

COVID-19 and flu symptoms are similar, so individuals who feel ill should call ahead before going to a doctor's office, local health department or urgent care. They should consult with a doctor about getting tested for flu and/or COVID-19. Flu symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough and/or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches and/or body aches

- Chills
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea (most common in children)

[Learn more](#) about the similarities and differences between the flu and COVID-19 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Early treatment with an antiviral drug can help prevent flu infections from becoming more serious. Anyone who thinks they have the flu should contact their doctor right away to see if they need treatment with a prescription antiviral drug.

Treatment with a prescription antiviral drug is especially important for hospitalized patients, people with severe flu illness and those who are at high risk of serious flu complications based on their age or health.

In the United States, flu season occurs in the fall and winter. While influenza viruses circulate year-round, most of the time flu activity [peaks](#) between December and February, but activity can continue through May.

Visit flu.nc.gov to learn more about the flu prevention, vaccination and treatment.

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