**EMBRACE: THE FACTS – INFLUENZA (FLU)**

The flu is a virus that spreads mainly when infected people cough, sneeze, or talk. The best way to prevent yourself and others from the flu is by receiving a yearly flu vaccination by October.1

**Flu symptoms** may take 1 to 4 days to appear after exposure to the virus, and symptoms may include:1

* Fever or feeling feverish/chills; though not everyone will have a fever
* Cough
* Muscle or body aches
* Fatigue (feeling very tired)
* Sore throat
* Headache
* Vomiting or diarrhea; mostly common in children

Some people are at a **higher risk of health complications** from the flu, including:1, and 2

* Adults 65 years and older
* Children younger than 2 years old
* Asthma
* Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)
* Chronic lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD] and cystic fibrosis)
* Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus)
* Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)
* Kidney diseases
* Liver disorders
* Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
* Neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions
* People who are obese with a body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher
* People younger than 19 years old on long-term aspirin- or salicylate-containing medications.
* People with a weakened immune system due to disease (such as people with HIV or AIDS, or some cancers such as leukemia) or medications (such as those receiving chemotherapy or radiation treatment for cancer, or persons with chronic conditions requiring chronic corticosteroids or other drugs that suppress the immune system)
* People who have had a stroke

The flu can cause **other health complications,** including pneumonia, bronchitis, ear infections, and dehydration, and can be serious enough that a person requires hospital care. The flu can result in death.1

A callout box(es) with the information containing:

American Indians and Alaska Natives adults are less likely than others to get the flu vaccination and

are more likely than others to have a severe flu outcome requiring hospitalization and ICU admission.3, and 4

Three Action Steps to Protect Your Community Against the Flu

1. **Vaccinate** every flu seasonfor individuals 6 months and older, especially people at higher risk.5
2. **Preventive Actions** including,
   * avoiding close contact with people who are sick,
   * covering coughs and sneezes,
   * washing your hands often with soap and water,
   * avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth,
   * cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, and
   * staying home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone.6
3. **Prescription medications** called “flu antiviral drugs” can be used to treat flu illness.5

Scientific studies examining **benefits** have proven that the **flu vaccination** can

* keep you from getting sick with the flu and may also protect people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain chronic health conditions.
* reduce the severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still get sick.
* reduce the risk of flu-associated hospitalization.
* Be an important preventive tool for people with certain chronic health conditions.
* helps protect pregnant people from flu during and after pregnancy and helps protect their infants from flu in their first few months of life.
* be lifesaving in children.7

**Find a Vaccination Today!** Flu and COVID-19 vaccines **can** be given at the same time. If you have not already received your COVID-19 vaccine, you are encouraged to get it along with the flu vaccine.8 To find out more about the vaccine near you, contact your local

* Indian Health Service, tribal, or urban health clinics and doctor’s offices (even if you don’t have a regular doctor or nurse)
* Community Health Representative or Community Health Aide
* Mobile and community-based immunization clinics that visit, or
* Pharmacies or grocery stores.

**Resources:**

1. [Key Facts About Influenza (Flu) | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm)
2. [People at Higher Risk of Flu Complications | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm)
3. [Health Equity and Flu | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/disparities-racial-ethnic-minority-groups.html)
4. [Vital Signs: Influenza Hospitalizations and Vaccination Coverage by Race and Ethnicity—United States, 2009–10 Through 2021–22 Influenza Seasons (cdc.gov)](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/pdfs/mm7143e1-H.pdf)
5. [Prevent Seasonal Flu | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/index.html)
6. [Preventive Steps | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/prevention.htm)
7. [What are the benefits of flu vaccination? | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccine-benefits.htm)
8. [2021-2022 Flu Season | 2021 Announcements (ihs.gov)](https://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/announcements/2021-announcements/2021-2022-flu-season/)

Messages that can be bolder and sprinkled throughout the page.

* Anyone can catch the flu
* The flu is a vaccine-preventable disease
* Get vaccinated every year
* If you are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, flu vaccination is especially important. When you get vaccinated, you reduce your risk of getting sick with flu and possibly being hospitalized or dying from flu.