

Common Questions about Influenza

Can I get a flu shot and a Covid shot or booster at the same time?

Yes. Studies conducted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic indicate that it is safe to get both a COVID-19 vaccine and a flu vaccine at the same visit. A recent CDC study published in JAMA suggests people who received a flu vaccine and an mRNA COVID-19 booster vaccine at the same time were slightly more likely (8% to 11%) to report systemic reactions including fatigue, headache, and muscle ache than people who only received a COVID-19 mRNA booster vaccine, but these reactions were mostly mild and resolved quickly. The findings of this study are consistent with safety data from clinical trials that did not identify any serious safety concerns with coadministration. If you have concerns about getting both vaccines at the same time, you should speak with a health care provider.

Are there high risk populations for influenza?

Anyone with a weakened immune system, older adults and children are at higher risk for influenza. Adults that are 65 years of age or older are encouraged to take a “high dose” quadravalent influenza vaccine. Randolph Public Health recommends that high risk groups be vaccinated for influenza this season.

What is flu?

Flu is a disease of the body’s breathing system, including the nose, throat and lungs. Flu is short for “influenza.” Flu is caused by a virus.

What are the symptoms of flu?

The most common symptoms of flu are fever, cough, and sore throat.

Is flu serious?

Yes, flu can be very serious. Every year in the U.S. seasonal flu causes thousands of hospital admissions and deaths.

How does flu spread?

The flu virus is in the wet spray (droplets of saliva and mucus) that comes out of the nose and mouth of someone who coughs or sneezes. If you are close enough to a person with the flu when they cough or sneeze, you can breathe in the virus and get sick. Flu symptoms start 1 - 4 days after a person breathes in the virus. Flu is spread easily from person to person. The virus can also live for a short time on things you touch like doorknobs, phones and toys. After you touch these objects, you can catch the virus when you touch your mouth, nose, or eyes. Adults with flu can spread it from about one day before symptoms appear to about one week after. Children can spread the flu even longer after they get sick.

Who should get the flu vaccine?

Everyone 6 months of age and older should be vaccinated for flu. The only exceptions are people with a severe allergy to something in the vaccine. It is especially important that the people listed below get a flu shot every year.

How do I know if I have the flu?

If you have fever with cough or sore throat, you may have the flu. If you think you have the flu, stay home from work and school and avoid contact with others so you do not spread the virus. If you think you might have flu and you need to see your doctor.

How can I prevent getting the flu?

Get flu vaccine every year as soon as it is available. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of your elbow if you don't have a tissue. Throw tissues away and wash your hands. Always wash your hands before touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Use household cleaners to clean things that are touched often, like door knobs, toys, and phones. Avoid close physical contact with people who are sick. Try to stay at least 3-6 feet from someone who is sick with the flu.

What to do if I do have the Flu?

Stay home from work and school if you get sick with a flu-like illness (fever with cough or sore throat) and avoid contact with others so the virus does not spread. Stay at home until you have been free from fever for at least 24 hours after your last dose of fever-reducing medication (like Tylenol, Advil or Motrin). For most people this will mean staying at home for about 4 days. People sick with flu should make sure to drink plenty of fluids, get plenty of rest, eat healthy foods, wash their hands often and stay home to avoid spreading the flu to other people. Over the counter pain relievers may help people with the flu feel more comfortable. Children and teens with the flu should never take aspirin, because a rare but serious disease called Reye syndrome can occur. Do not give cough or cold medicines to children younger than 4 years of age.

If you have any questions, please contact the Randolph Public Health Department office at (781) 961-0924 or by email at gcody@randolph-ma.gov.



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