

The American Lung Association urges you and your loved ones to get a flu shot every influenza season.

You should get your flu shot as soon as it becomes available in the late summer or early fall. Even if you didn't get vaccinated early in the influenza season, immunization into the spring or as long as the influenza virus is in circulation can be beneficial. This is because in many seasons, influenza activity doesn't peak until winter or early spring. In fact, as long as influenza viruses are in circulation, it's a good idea to get a flu shot. For most adults, the vaccine can help protect against influenza within 2 weeks.

The CDC recommends annual influenza immunization for everyone 6 months of age and older.

Getting vaccinated against the flu each year is one of the most important steps people can take to help protect themselves from flu and its complications. Even healthy people need a flu shot – to help stay healthy and to help prevent the spread of flu to others. Groups at higher risk of developing influenza-related complications include:

- People 50 years of age and older
- Children 6 months-18 years of age
- Pregnant women
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, diabetes, and others
- Residents of long-term care facilities and nursing homes

Additionally, those who come into close contact with high-risk groups should get a flu shot, not only to help protect themselves against influenza, but also to help avoid spreading the disease to more vulnerable populations. They include:

Household contacts and caregivers of anyone in a high-risk group, including contacts such as parents, siblings, grandparents, babysitters, and child-care providers
Health-care personnel

Note: Children younger than 9 years of age may need 2 doses approximately 1 month apart, depending on their influenza vaccination history.

Some people should not get the vaccine or should first talk with their health-care provider.

- People with severe allergies to eggs
- People who have had a severe allergic reaction to a past influenza vaccination
- Children younger than 6 months of age, because no vaccination is licensed yet for this age group

Visit: <http://www.facesofinfluenza.com/en/influenza-risk/> for more information.

STAY HEALTHY - FOR YOUR FAMILY - FOR YOURSELF