




Navigate to:



# Flu, COVID-19, and RSV Facts

Respiratory viruses like flu <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/> , COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/index.html> , and RSV <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/about/index.html>  cause hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths during each year's fall and winter virus season. One of the best ways to protect yourself is by getting vaccinated. A vaccine can keep you from getting very sick and needing medical care for these illnesses. Flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines help people *risk less* severe illness and *do more* of what they enjoy.

## Who is at risk for severe illness from flu, COVID-19, and RSV?

Some people are at higher risk for severe illness from these respiratory viruses than others.

You are considered high risk for a severe case of flu or COVID-19 if you:


- Are 65 years or older
- Are pregnant
- Have certain health conditions such as obesity, asthma, diabetes, or heart disease
- Have a weakened immune system.

You are considered high risk for severe RSV if you:

- Are 75 years or older, or

- Are 60–74 years old and live in a nursing home or have certain health conditions such as:
  - Diabetes
  - Heart disease
  - Obesity
  - Lung disease

### **About respiratory illnesses**

Learn more about respiratory illnesses and what you can do to protect yourself <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/> 

### **Flu, COVID-19, and RSV: What you should know**

Read the fact sheet highlighting who is at higher risk for severe illness from flu, COVID-19, and RSV; the benefits of getting vaccinated; and tips on what to do if you are sick [/risk-less-do-more/for-health-care-providers/patient-handout-what-you-should-know-about-flu-covid-19-and-rsv-vaccines/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/rsv/patient-handout-what-you-should-know-about-flu-covid-19-and-rsv-vaccines/index.html)

## **Frequently asked questions**

It's normal to have questions about vaccines. Below are answers to commonly asked questions about flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines.

### **Flu vaccines**

#### **Do flu vaccines cause the flu?**

You can't get the flu from a flu vaccine because flu vaccines use either a dead or weakened form of the virus or no virus at all. Some people who are vaccinated still get the flu after vaccination, but even if you get the flu, being vaccinated helps your symptoms stay milder.

#### **I got a flu vaccine last year so why do I need one again?**

Flu viruses can change from year to year, so the flu vaccine is updated to help target the current strains of flu. You should get a flu vaccine every year so that you're protected against the latest flu viruses spreading in your community.

#### **I never get the flu, so why should I get the flu vaccine?**

Some types of flu viruses spread more easily than others, and the most common flu viruses infecting people can change from year to year. Getting vaccinated gives you better protection from new or changing virus strains. If you do get the flu, there's no way to predict how bad your symptoms might be. But if you're vaccinated, then your risk of getting severely ill is cut nearly in half.

# COVID-19 vaccines

## Do COVID-19 vaccines cause long-term side effects?

Most people have either no side effects at all or mild side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Like with any medicine, rare but serious reactions to vaccines can happen. Data show that for every 1 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines given, five or fewer severe allergic reactions occur.

Some people have been concerned about heart inflammation after a COVID-19 vaccine, but the risk of heart inflammation is higher after getting COVID-19 than after getting the vaccine. Vaccines are also known to lower the risk of COVID-19's long-term health effects, or Long COVID, which is much more common than serious vaccine side effects.

## What if I already got a COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 virus has changed a lot. The 2024–2025 COVID-19 vaccines have been updated to target the newest variants. If you're up to date with the vaccines, you're more protected from severe illness even if you get COVID-19.

## Why should I keep getting COVID-19 vaccines?

COVID-19 is still around and still making people seriously ill. Last year, 900,000 people were hospitalized and 75,000 people died from COVID-19. You are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 if you're 65 years old or older; pregnant; have a health condition such as heart disease, obesity, or asthma; or have a weakened immune system. COVID-19 vaccines help protect you from COVID-19's worst outcomes.

# RSV vaccines

## What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. But for older adults and infants, RSV can cause disease deep in their lungs.

## Have RSV vaccines been studied enough?

In clinical trials, RSV vaccines were proven to protect people from getting really sick from RSV. The most common side effects are a sore arm, lack of energy, and headache, and those symptoms don't last long. Severe allergic reactions are rare.

RSV can be very dangerous, especially for people 75 years or older, or people 60–74 years old who live in a nursing home or have certain medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, or lung disease. It can make them have trouble breathing or develop an infection deep in the lungs. But a dose of an RSV vaccine helps protect you from serious symptoms.


# General vaccination questions

## Can I get more than one of these vaccines at the same time?

You can get more than one of this season's vaccines at the same time. You might have more side effects if you get more than one of these vaccines at the same time, but any side effects should be mild and should not last long. Some of the most common side effects are arm pain or swelling, headache, and fatigue.

## How do I know a vaccine is recommended for me?

Talk to your health care provider about which vaccines are right for you or visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)

<https://www.vaccines.gov/en/>  .

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Content created by Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA)

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