



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
Dave A. Chokshi, MD MSc  
Commissioner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Friday, January 21, 2022**

## **REMINDER TO NEW YORKERS: GO GET YOUR FLU SHOT**

*Everyone ages 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine. Check with your provider or visit [nyc.gov/vaccinefinder](https://nyc.gov/vaccinefinder), call 311, or text FLU to 877-877*

**January 21, 2022** — The Health Department today reminded New Yorkers to get vaccinated against [the flu](#). Influenza is circulating widely in New York City. Flu vaccination data for this year show that for children 6 months to 18 years old, there has been a 12% decrease this season compared to the same time last season (a decrease of 100,716 children [838,169 last season to 737,453 this season]). The data have shown continued increases for vaccinated adults, with a 45% increase in the number of adults aged 19 and older who have received the flu vaccine compared to the same time last season (an increase of 520,648 adults [1,159,065 last season to 1,679,713 this season]), though this increase may be attributed in part to more providers reporting adult flu vaccinations to the Citywide Immunization Registry.

All New Yorkers 6 months and older should get a seasonal flu vaccine. New Yorkers 50 and older, children 6 months to 5 years, those with chronic conditions and pregnant people are at particular risk of serious outcomes from the flu. New Yorkers can find a flu vaccine nearest them by using the City's [Vaccine Finder](#).

“New York City is seeing a rise in influenza activity, but vaccination rates for children are lower than previous years,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “Parents, please get your child—anyone 6 months and older—vaccinated against the flu as soon as possible. All New Yorkers should continue to follow the precautions we know work, against both the flu and COVID-19: vaccination, masking, improving ventilation, physical distancing, and staying home when you are sick.”

As of this week, 40.4% of children ages 6 months through 18 years (737,453) are vaccinated against the flu, a 5.5 percentage point decrease compared to the 2020-2021 season. So far this season, no pediatric deaths related to influenza have been reported.

According to Health Department data from a 2020 survey of New York City adults, flu vaccination coverage was a little over 50%, with disparities among racial and ethnic groups for adults 18 and older. From the 2020 data, Black adults reported coverage at 44%, Hispanic adults at 52%, White adults at 51% and Asian/Pacific Islanders at 57%. Reported coverage among Black adults 65 and older (63%) was lower than that among Asian/Pacific Islanders in this age category (85%). There were no differences from coverage among White adults (69%) or Hispanic adults (71%) compared to Black adults age 65 and older. The Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2030 goal for flu vaccination coverage is 70%.

It is especially important to get the flu shot this year because influenza and COVID-19 are both respiratory illnesses and spread in similar ways. Both viruses are circulating now in New York City and cases are expected to continue to occur. All New Yorkers ages 5 and older should get a COVID-19 vaccination. Booster shots are also now available to anyone ages 12 and older.

COVID-19 vaccines—whether a first, second, or third dose—can be safely administered at the same time as a flu vaccine. For flu vaccines, use the City’s [Vaccine Finder](#), call 311, or text FLU to 877-877. For COVID-19 vaccines, use the [Vaccine Finder](#) or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) to schedule an appointment at certain sites or request an at-home vaccination appointment.

Many community health centers, hospitals, and City-run clinics provide no or low-cost vaccines to established patients as well as any New Yorker. The flu and COVID-19 vaccines are available at chain pharmacies, like CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens and Duane Reade, and at many independent pharmacies. Check with your local pharmacy to confirm if they are providing the vaccines and if they vaccinate children and the age range they can serve. You may also check with your regular health care provider. The flu vaccine is covered by most health insurance plans without a co-pay. COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost and regardless of immigration status.

A typical influenza season usually starts in the late fall and lasts throughout the spring. Since influenza activity can be unpredictable and influenza viruses can be found year-round, it is important to get the vaccine as early as possible, though it is never too late to be vaccinated. A flu vaccine is necessary each year because the vaccine provides protection for only one season. This year’s flu vaccine contains two new virus strains.

Influenza-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people, especially children, may have vomiting and diarrhea. People may also be infected with influenza and have respiratory symptoms without a fever. COVID-19 and influenza share many common symptoms, so it is important to get tested if you suspect you may have either illness as diagnosis can impact treatment.

The steps New Yorkers take to prevent COVID-19 are also applicable to influenza.

- Wear a higher-grade mask, such as a KN95, KF94, or N95. Using a cloth mask over a disposable mask improves the fit and adds layers.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, distancing and staying home if ill can prevent the spread.
- Other precautions include:
  - Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
  - While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.

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