



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, September 27, 2021**

AS LONG AS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT VACCINES, DON'T FORGET YOUR FLU SHOT!

There are roughly 2,000 deaths each year from seasonal influenza and pneumonia, routinely the third leading cause of death in NYC

Because COVID-19 transmission is still occurring in NYC, it's crucial New Yorkers get vaccinated against the flu to prevent severe illness and hospitalization

Flu vaccines can now be found on the City's vaccine finder

September 27, 2021 – The Health Department today announced a [new citywide campaign](#) (PDF) reminding New Yorkers to get their annual flu vaccine. 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 now find a flu vaccine nearest them by using the City's [Vaccine Finder](#).

“We saw record-setting influenza vaccinations among adults last season, and we hope New Yorkers will protect themselves in still larger numbers this year,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “I urge all New Yorkers to get the flu vaccine as soon as you can. It will keep you and your family safe from flu. It may be the wrong time for the flu, but it’s the right time to get a flu vaccine.”

The flu media campaign will run citywide, beginning on Monday, September 27, and will appear on subway (digital live boards), bus shelters, Staten Island Ferry, neighborhood business (check cashing facilities, laundromats and bodegas), newspapers, television, radio as well as digital and social media channels. Ads will run in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and in additional languages for newspaper ads.

**Wrong time for the flu.
Right time for a flu shot.**

COVID-19 has taught us that we all need to be protected.
A flu shot helps protect you and your family.

Especially: Children under 5 | If you are over 65 | If you are or may be pregnant | If you have other medical conditions

For more information and to find a location to get your flu shot, visit [nyc.gov/flu](#) or call 311

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Last year, according to preliminary data, there were no flu-related pediatric deaths in New York City and only one nationally, likely due to social distancing, masking, and people staying at home due to COVID-19. During the 2019-2020 season, which was more reflective of a typical flu season, there were five flu-related pediatric deaths in the city and 187 nationally.

Last flu season, the Health Department saw record numbers of adults get the flu vaccine. According to data from the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR), there was a 35% increase in the number of adults 19 and older received the vaccine (from 1,037,900 adults in the 2019-2020 season compared to 1,400,800 in the 2020-2021 season).

For children ages 6-59 months, there was a 13% decline the number of doses administered (from 344,200 children in the 2019-2020 season compared to 308,000 in the 2020-2021 season). This age group had a coverage rate of 67% during last season, which was 10 percentage points lower when compared to the 2019-2020 season (76%).

For children aged 5 through 18, coverage increased by 3% (from 649,300 children in the 2019-2020 season compared to 671,500 in the 2020-2021 season). For children in this age group, the coverage rate last season was 49%, nearly 2% more than the previous season (47%).

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%.

The flu vaccine is widely available for all New Yorkers. New Yorkers can use the City's [Vaccine Finder](#), call 311, or text FLU to 877-877 to find a flu vaccination. You may also check with your regular health care provider to see if they have flu vaccine. Many community health centers, hospitals, and City-run clinics provide no or low-cost flu vaccines to established patients as well as any New Yorker for flu vaccination. Flu vaccine is available at chain pharmacies, like CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens and Duane Reade, and at many independent pharmacies. Pharmacists can vaccinate children as young as age 2. Check with your local pharmacy to confirm if they are providing flu vaccine and if they vaccinate children and the age range they can serve. Flu vaccine is covered by most health insurance plans without a co-pay. COVID-19 vaccines—whether a first, second, or third dose—can be safely administered at the same time as a flu vaccine.

Last influenza season, 2020-2021, was one of the lowest on record, likely due to the fact that New Yorkers were following COVID-19 precautions. 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 are also applicable to influenza. Face coverings, 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 of influenza. Additional ways to reduce the spread of germs like influenza:

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- If you are sick with influenza-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
 - If you have symptoms of influenza-like illness, you should get tested for COVID-19.
- 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 like influenza.

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