



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE
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Commissioner

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FLU VACCINATION SURGES THIS SEASON COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

Early flu vaccination data show a 37% increase in vaccination among adults and a 27% increase for children compared to the same period last season

October 28, 2020 – The Health Department today released early flu vaccination data for this year’s influenza season, showing substantial increases compared to the same time last year. From July 1 – October 24, 2020, there was a 37% increase in the number of adults aged 19 and older who have received the vaccine compared to the same time last year (an increase of 189,017 adults [517,676 last season to 706,693 this season]), and a 27% increase for children 6 months to 18 years old (an increase of 105,881 children [397,626 last season to 503,507 this season]). In total, over 1,210,000 New Yorkers have received this year’s flu vaccine based on doses entered into the Citywide Immunization Registry, however, since adults are not required to be reported to the Registry like children are, likely more doses have been given than captured. The City aims to have a historic flu campaign this season, with more New Yorkers getting vaccinated than ever before. All New Yorkers older than 6 months of age should get a [seasonal flu](#) vaccine. It is especially important for adults 50 years and older, pregnant people, children 6 months to 5 years old, and people with underlying conditions to get vaccinated.

“This promising progress is only possible because New Yorkers are looking out for one another and doing the right thing by getting their flu vaccines,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi**. “This year could be the most important flu vaccine you ever get. Now is the perfect time to get the vaccine if you haven’t yet. Our friends, families and neighbors are counting on all of us to help keep each other safe.”

“Influenza can be deadly, and the best protection is to get the flu vaccine. The flu vaccine is safe and effective,” said **Assistant Commissioner for the Bureau of Immunization, Dr. Jane R. Zucker**. “The vaccine can reduce your chance of getting influenza, and if you’ve received a flu vaccination and do get influenza, you are less likely to have severe complications. Every New Yorker who can get the vaccine should get vaccinated.”

The flu vaccine is widely available for all New Yorkers. Check with your regular health care provider to see if they have flu vaccine. Many community health centers and hospital clinics, along with all NYC Health + Hospitals clinics, provide no or low-cost flu vaccines. Flu vaccines are also widely 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 provide flu vaccine and the age ranges they serve. New Yorkers can use the Health Department's [NYC Health Map](#), call 311, or text FLU to 877-877 to find a flu vaccination location. There are over 870 sites listed on Health Map which can be searched to find locations that serve people without insurance to find a free flu vaccination. The health department also provides a list of community flu vaccination events at [nyc.gov/flu](#). Flu vaccine is covered by most health insurance plans without a co-pay.

The Health Department recommends people 65 years and older receive one of the two vaccines for this age group (high dose or adjuvanted vaccine). Because of increased demand, these vaccines may be more difficult to obtain, so seniors should receive the standard dose flu vaccine and not delay vaccination if they are having trouble obtaining the high-dose or adjuvanted dose.

This year, New York City is supporting expanded flu vaccination activities with the Department's partners, such as NYC Health + Hospitals, community health centers, community-based organizations, urgent care centers and is offering flu vaccine at many COVID-19 testing sites. The Department has also launched a new program this year to deploy teams of community vaccinators throughout the city to meet New Yorkers' needs. Examples may include community-based testing sites, public clinics, pharmacies, places of worship, among others. Establishing these contracts may help when the City offers COVID-19 vaccination services once a vaccine is available. Additionally, the Department's citywide, [annual flu vaccine campaign](#) is underway and appears on the subway, bus shelters, Staten Island Ferry, in neighborhood businesses, newspapers, television, radio, as well as digital and social media channels. Ads are running in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and in additional languages for newspaper ads.

Flu 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 four virus strains, three of which are new this year.

Flu-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 flu and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

The steps New Yorkers take to prevent COVID-19 are also applicable to flu. 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 flu. Additional ways to reduce the spread of germs like flu:

- 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 flu-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.)
- 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 flu.

"The best way to protect yourself, your family and your community is by receiving a flu vaccine," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "More and more New Yorkers are doing their part to prevent the spread of the flu. Thanks to Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi's annual flu vaccination campaign to improve access and raise awareness for this vital lifesaving vaccine, there is now an increase in flu vaccinations for adults and children compared to last season."

"Given the circumstances with COVID-19 this year, it is especially important to get your annual flu shot to protect yourself and those around you who may have underlying health conditions. The number of folks who have gotten their flu shot thus far is encouraging. Those who have not yet taken this step should do so to keep yourself as well as those around you from the worst of the influenza season," said **Staten Island Borough President James Oddo**.

"As the COVID pandemic continues, it's important for New Yorkers to remember to also protect themselves from other communicable diseases like the flu. Vaccines against the flu have proven effective and are widely available at low or no cost. It's encouraging that this year's City Health Department data shows that more New Yorkers are getting their seasonal flu shots earlier, as I did myself," said **Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried of Manhattan, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Health**.

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