

Flu Vaccine Toolkit

2020 Flu Vaccine Tools and Resources

NOW IS THE TIME

Let's Protect Ourselves and Our Community from the Flu

Why the Flu Vaccine is Essential this Year

During the pandemic, it is more important than ever to get the flu shot. Protect yourself, your family, and your community from flu. Here are three important reasons why:

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- To reduce the overall burden of respiratory illnesses.
 - To protect vulnerable populations at risk for severe illness.
 - To reduce the burden on the healthcare system. Hospitals in the state are already devoting medical resources to caring for patients with COVID-19 and need to continue to care for people with other conditions and life-threatening illnesses such as strokes, heart attacks and traumas.
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There's no better time than now to get the flu vaccine!

Community Health Engagement and Outreach, in partnership with Agriculture and Environment Extension, is providing this toolkit to help its partners communicate about the importance of the flu vaccine, particularly during COVID-19. The flu vaccine prevents thousands of flu related hospitalizations and deaths every year in Missouri. You can lower your risk of getting the flu by getting vaccinated today. This toolkit helps to provide action steps, digital and print resources, and social media content for individuals and organizations to promote the importance of flu vaccinations.

We hope this toolkit is helpful in providing one convenient location for resources which can be easily tailored to your audience.

GET THE FACTS

Frequently Asked Questions

If COVID-19 is spreading in my community, should I get the flu vaccination?

Yes. Getting the flu vaccine is more important than ever. Just like wearing a mask, getting a flu shot is an easy and safe action we can take to keep ourselves and others healthy during the pandemic. It is also important because getting the vaccine will protect against flu and help save limited medical resources for COVID-19 patients. It is likely that both COVID-19 and flu will be circulating this fall and winter. Getting the flu vaccination means there will be one less disease you and your doctor will be concerned about this season. We may not have a vaccine for COVID-19 yet, but we do have an effective and safe vaccine for the flu.

Can I safely get a flu vaccine if COVID-19 is spreading in my community?

Yes. You can contact your local health department or local pharmacy. You can also search www.vaccinefinder.org to find where the vaccine is available near you.

If I do not have a primary care doctor, can I still get the vaccine?

Yes. You can contact your local health department or local pharmacy. You can also search <https://vaccinefinder.org/> to find the nearest vaccination location.

Do flu vaccines cause any side effects?

Side effects of the flu vaccine are generally mild and go away within a few days. Common side effects from the flu shot include:

- Soreness, redness, and/or swelling from the shot
- Headache, fever and or nausea
- Muscle aches
- The flu shot, like other injections, can occasionally cause fainting

GET THE FACTS

Misconceptions about the Flu Vaccine

Getting influenza is less harmful than getting the influenza vaccination.

While the influenza vaccination may cause minimal side effects the risk of contracting influenza without any immunity may increase the risk of severe illness in those with underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease.

The flu vaccination is grown in a lab, so it must be a pharmaceutical scam.

Inactive viruses are grown in a lab. The virus is then killed. Flu vaccines contain the dead virus. While grown in a lab, the influenza shot is not a pharmaceutical scam. The influenza vaccination prevents individuals from an increased risk of serious illness which would require extensive treatment and medication.

I got a flu shot last year, but still ended up getting influenza.

There could be several reasons for this scenario. No flu vaccine is perfect, so its possible that the flu vaccine did not "work". Circulating flu strains differ from year to year so the vaccine may not have been a good "match". It takes a few weeks to build immunity after your flu shot, so if you are exposed to the flu in the meantime, you might still catch it. Some people mistake colds for the flu. The flu shot does not prevent infection from cold viruses, nor can it cause you to catch a cold. All in all, even though the flu shot is not perfect, it is our best defense for controlling influenza for ourselves, our families and our communities.

The flu vaccination is made up of harmful ingredients such as formaldehyde and thimerosal.

Data shows that while these ingredients are used to preserve and make the vaccination effective, they come in such tiny amounts that they are not harmful to receive in the vaccination.

TALKING POINTS

Helpful Info When Having Conversations

Typically each year, over 100,000 Missourians become sick from the flu. Many Missourians of all ages become seriously ill and some are hospitalized. 2020 is anything but typical, and health officials are urging Missourians to get the flu vaccine.

This year it is more important than ever to get a flu vaccine due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to help save limited medical resources for COVID-19 patients.

Just like wearing a mask, getting a flu shot is an easy and safe action we can take to keep ourselves and others healthy during the pandemic.

Influenza and COVID-19 share many of the same symptoms. Preventing influenza means fewer people will need to seek medical care and testing for possible COVID-19 or influenza. Getting the vaccine protects you, your family and your community.

Flu and COVID-19 symptoms significantly overlap one another. Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea. Similarities and differences between flu and COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

The CDC estimates that flu causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and 12,000 – 61,000 deaths each year. While it is important to minimize this toll, it is especially crucial during the pandemic. A bad flu season combined with COVID-19 can put our front-line workers at higher risk for illness.

TALKING POINTS

Helpful Info When Having Conversations

Essential workers, including doctors and nurses, are doing their part to keep us healthy. We all have a part to play to ensure Missouri has the capacity to care for all patients, and we can help by rolling up our sleeves and getting vaccinated.

Everyone six months or older should get the flu vaccine, especially our most vulnerable community members. Anyone can get sick from the flu, people with underlying health conditions or children age 5 and under, and adults older than 65, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems or chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease are at high risk for flu-related complications.

While the effectiveness of the flu vaccine varies from year to year, studies indicate that some protection is better than none at all. You are less likely to spread the flu virus to those around you if you are vaccinated.

One action to take to protect yourself during COVID-19 is to get the flu vaccine. Little is known how a person could be affected by experiencing both viruses at the same time.

The flu shot is available at local pharmacies, health departments and provider's offices. Go to www.vaccinefinder.org to locate vaccination locations near you.

FLU VACCINE

Resources & Surveillance Sites

Resources:

General

CDC: [Cleaning to Prevent the Flu](#)

[The Flu and You: What is it, how it spreads, how to prevent it](#)
[Fact Sheet](#)
[Brochure](#)

[Flu Information for Parents With Young Children](#)

[Flu Information for Parents](#) (Flyer and Children's Activity Sheet)

[What to do if Your Child gets the Flu](#) [Children's Activity Book](#)

[Messages for People at High Risk of Flu Complications](#)

[Misconceptions about Flu Vaccines](#)

[Protect Your Health This Season](#)

MU Health: [Flu, Cold or COVID-19? Consider the Symptoms](#)
[This Year, Flu Vaccination More Important Than Ever](#)

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

[Influenza Information and Links](#)

[Influenza Data and Statistical Reports](#)

[Missouri Immunization Coalition](#)

FLU VACCINE

Marketing Tools & Resources

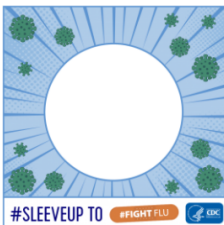
Marketing Resources:

[Digital Media Toolkit \(CDC\)](#)

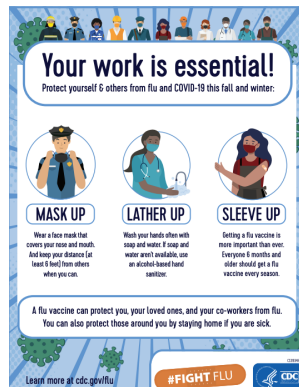
Social Media



Frames - #SleeveUp Campaign



Print Materials



Videos

FLU VACCINE

Resources and Reporting Tools

Resources:

Multilingual

[Influenza Resources in Spanish](#)

[Influenza Marketing Kit in Spanish](#)

Tools

All Things Missouri: [Missouri Immunization Report](#)

The All Things Missouri Immunization Report allows you to access data on immunizations in your area which can be broken down by county, public health region or congressional districts.



Missouri Hospital Association: [COVID-19 and Influenza Data Dashboard](#)

FLU VACCINE

Vaccination Locator Tools

Resources:

Tools (cont.)

Vaccine Finder - Find a Vaccination Location Near You
It's easy to remember - www.vacinefinder.org

Widgets

Where can I get a vaccine? This tool will help locate places nearby where people can receive flu vaccinations, as well as other vaccinations. If you have a website, you can embed the widget on your webpage to help others locate flu vaccination locations more easily.

For further information or additional resources,
please contact your Community Health Engagement & Outreach Team.

FLU VACCINE FACTS

Debunking the Myths

MYTH

If I get a flu shot, it will give me the flu.

FACT

No, flu vaccines cannot cause flu illness.

MYTH

I got a flu vaccine last year, so I do not need another one this year.

FACT

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months old & older with rare exception.

MYTH

I should wait to get vaccinated so that I'm covered through the end of the season

FACT

People should get a flu shot as soon as they are available because it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop.

MYTH

Women who are pregnant should not get a flu shot.

FACT

Flu vaccination helps protect women during and after pregnancy.