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2024

Flu Shot Toolkit

& Social Media Messaging



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield
Blue Care Network**
of Michigan


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INTRODUCTION

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan continues its commitment to improving the health and wellness of our Michigan residents this fall by raising awareness around the influenza virus. This toolkit, complete with five messages and downloadable images, was created as a resource to address the upcoming flu season and encourage vaccinations.

From October 1, 2023, through June 15, 2024, the CDC estimates there have been 35 to 65 million people sick with the flu; resulting in 390,000 to 830,000 hospitalizations and 25,000 to 72,000 flu deaths.

The most effective way to protect yourself and others during the peak flu season, between October and May, is by getting your annual flu shot.



According to the World Health Organization, there are around

1 billion

cases of seasonal influenza annually.



From the CDC's findings, researchers estimate there have been

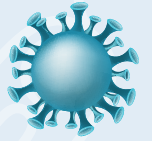
16 to 30 million

medical visits for flu-related symptoms between 2023 and June 2024.

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE FLU SHOT



What is influenza? Influenza, or the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and occasionally the lungs. Symptoms can range from mild to severe, but in some cases, can lead to death. Annual vaccination is the most effective strategy for preventing influenza infections.

When should I get my flu shot? Now. Peak flu season typically begins in October and can extend through May. It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to become effective, so getting vaccinated now ensures you're protected.

Will the flu shot make me sick? No. The flu shot is safe and effective. Minor side effects from the flu shot include a sore arm or low-grade fever. Consulting with your primary care physician before getting vaccinated is recommended.

READY TO GET YOUR FLU SHOT? HERE'S WHAT TO DO NEXT.

There are several ways to get the flu vaccine, even if you live outside of Michigan. Options include:

- Visit a participating pharmacy. Blue Cross members can visit a pharmacy with your Blue Cross member ID card. While most pharmacies will accept our members' coverage, which means your flu shot will be free, ask before you get the vaccine.
- Schedule an appointment with your primary care provider. An office copayment may apply.
- Visit one of the many community events and clinics offering free flu shots. Go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a vaccine site near you.



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SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Here are **five messages** to help bring vaccination awareness during the flu season, which typically circulates during the fall and winter months, beginning in October and peaking between December and March:

- You can copy and paste the messaging, including the article link, into your social media platforms.
- Download the related image by double-clicking and then attach it to the post.
- Tag **@Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan** on Facebook and LinkedIn, **@BCBSM** on X/Twitter and **@bcbsmichigan** on Instagram.

MESSAGE TOPIC 1: VACCINE ELIGIBILITY

Who should get a flu shot? Everyone 6 months and older should get an annual flu shot, but it's especially important for those in these high-risk categories: Children younger than 5, pregnant women, adults 65+, those with chronic conditions and caregivers, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Find flu vaccines in your area, visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

Learn more about the flu shot from our friends at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's MI Blue Daily blog.
<https://www.mibluedaily.com/stories/flu-season/flu-shot>

MESSAGE TOPIC 2: COMMON FLU SHOT MISCONCEPTIONS

Do I really need to get the vaccine every year? In short, yes! Getting a flu shot lowers your risk of getting the flu by 40% to 60%, according to the CDC. An annual flu shot can help you stay healthy and reduce your risk of serious outcomes.

Learn how the flu shot works to protect you. Take a look at this article from our friends at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's MI Blue Daily blog.
<https://www.mibluedaily.com/stories/community/how-the-flu-shot-works-to-protect-you>


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MESSAGE TOPIC 3: HOW THE FLU SPREADS

Did you know flu germs can spread through tiny droplets from coughs, sneezes and even talking? It's important for those with higher risk of serious complications to get the flu vaccine and to be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccine and boosters.

To read about how contagious the flu is, take a look at this related article by Dr. James Grant, SVP and chief medical officer, at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

<https://www.mibluedaily.com/stories/prevention/how-contagious-is-the-flu>



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MESSAGE TOPIC 4: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COVID-19 AND THE FLU

Wondering how the flu differs from COVID-19? COVID-19 may be more contagious than the flu, but make no mistake, the flu is still a dangerous virus that requires vaccination.

Read more about the differences between the two on Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's MI Blue Daily blog.

<https://www.mibluedaily.com/stories/family-health/the-difference-between-covid-19-and-the-flu>



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MESSAGE TOPIC 5: SCHEDULING YOUR FLU SHOT

Missed your chance for a flu shot in the fall? Don't worry — vaccination in December or beyond is still effective against circulating flu strains. Prioritize your health and get vaccinated now.

Find flu vaccines in your area, visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

Learn more about the flu season from our friends at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's MI Blue Daily blog.

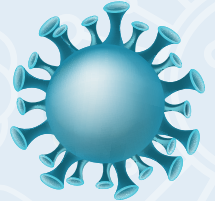
<https://www.mibluedaily.com/stories/prevention/when-is-flu-season>



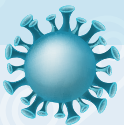
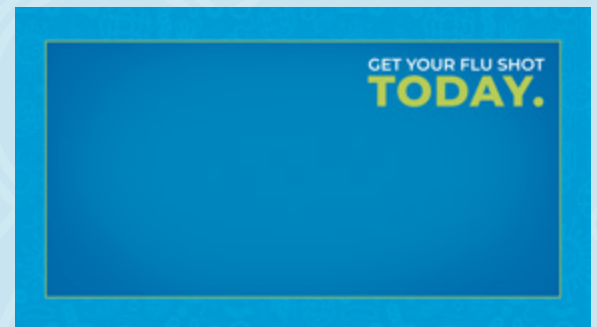
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HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES*

- bcbsm.com/preventflu
Learn more about coverage, necessity of the flu shot, when to get it and more.
- mibluexcrosscomplete.com/flu
Blue Cross Complete members — learn about the flu, how to prevent it and see other frequently asked questions.
- vaccines.gov*
- cdc.gov/flu | espanol.cdc.gov/flu*
- michigan.gov/flu*



Teams/Zoom
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*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Cross Complete do not own or control the content on these websites.

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