

What you need to know about the flu shot



About the flu shot

1. Who should get a flu shot?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone 6 months and older get an annual flu shot, but it's especially important for those in these high-risk categories:

- Children younger than 5 years old, but not younger than 6 months of age
- Pregnant women
- Adults 65 and older
- Anyone with chronic conditions such as asthma, COPD, diabetes and heart disease

It's equally important for parents and caregivers of infants and toddlers to get flu shots, too.

2. When should I get my flu shot?

Flu season typically starts in October and can go as late as May. It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to take effect, so it's a good idea to get the shot now to make sure you're protected.

3. Will the flu shot make me sick?

No. The flu shot is safe and effective for most people, but check with your doctor before you get one. The vaccine is made up of non-active flu particles and won't cause you to get the flu, but it will enable your body to develop the necessary antibodies to ward off influenza (flu) viruses. Common side effects are redness, soreness or mild swelling at the injection site.

4. What should I do after I get my flu shot?

If you received your flu shot at a participating pharmacy or work, make sure you write down the date and let your doctor know at your next appointment so he or she can keep your immunization record up to date — and you healthy.

About your flu shot benefit

5. Where can I get my flu shot?

Visit a participating pharmacy with your member ID card to get your flu shot today. While most pharmacies will accept your coverage, be sure to ask before you get your vaccine. You can also schedule an appointment with your primary doctor to get one. Your office visit copayment may apply.

For Blue Cross members without BCBSM pharmacy coverage: Visit bcbsm.com/preventflu to see a list of immunizing pharmacies that provide vaccines under your medical coverage.

6. I have an HMO plan. Do I need to see my doctor first for a referral?

No, but tell your doctor if you get a flu shot from another source so he or she can keep track in your medical records.