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# Care Connections<sup>SM</sup>

Sharing the  
knowledge for  
better health

SEPTEMBER 2023

## It is time to get your shots

September is the start of influenza (flu) season. Flu season is the time during the fall and winter when the flu virus is most common. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months and older get the flu shot every year.



Why get a flu shot? Because flu can cause serious symptoms. It affects your lungs, nose, and throat. Also, the virus is always changing. The shot you take is updated each year to better protect you.

There are several types of flu shots. Ask your doctor which type is best for you and if you need any other shots. You can also go to [cdc.gov/flu](http://cdc.gov/flu) to learn more about flu shots.

You should also think about getting your pneumonia and COVID-19 vaccines. People with chronic illness may be at more risk of getting sick. People who are pregnant or over 65 years old are also at higher risk. Getting very sick from infection may lead to other health problems or even hospital visits. Vaccines can protect you from getting sick. Even if you do get sick, vaccines can help keep symptoms mild.

Keep reading to learn more about how vaccines can keep you and loved ones safe and healthy.

### U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves RSV vaccine

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a dangerous illness that targets the lungs. Older adults and those with chronic illness are at extra high risk. Ask your doctor about the new RSV vaccine approved for adults 60 years and older.



## Flu and pneumonia: common questions and answers

There are a lot of myths about flu and pneumonia vaccines. These misunderstandings keep people from getting the shots. Here are some common questions and answers:

### Will the flu shot give me the flu?

- No. You can't get the flu from getting the flu shot.

### If I have the pneumonia shot, can I still get pneumonia?

- Maybe. But your chance of getting pneumonia is lower if you get the right vaccines. Ask your doctor which vaccine you need and when.

### Will the flu shot protect me against pneumonia?

- The flu shot is different from the pneumonia vaccine. You should get both shots if your doctor says so. This will give you the best chance to stay healthy.

### Can I get a flu shot and pneumonia vaccine at the same time?

- Yes. You can get one shot in each arm. This is safe. Getting the flu shot and pneumonia vaccine will not make you sick.

### Should children get flu shots and pneumonia vaccines?

- Yes. Children can get the flu and pneumonia too. And they often get sicker. Any child six months or older should get a flu shot. Pneumonia vaccines should also be given to young children—ask your doctor about the best timing for this shot.

### What about the other people in my household?

- Make sure your family and other caregivers get protected, too. Flu shots and pneumonia vaccines can help the people in your household stay healthy.

### Who should not get the flu or pneumonia shot?

- You should always talk to your doctor before getting a shot or vaccine. This is even more important if:
  - You had a bad reaction (allergy) to shots in the past.
  - You feel sick or have a fever.
  - You are pregnant—talk to your doctor about the pneumonia vaccine.
  - You have an allergy to eggs. Some vaccines may still be safe for you—check with your doctor.

## COVID-19 vaccinations for 2023

COVID-19 vaccines have played a big part in keeping us and our families safe during the pandemic. However, because the virus is always changing, we need to take action to stay safe. Updated COVID-19 vaccines are a key step to reduce future spread of the virus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that those 6 months and older get one updated Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. This is whether or not you had any original COVID-19 vaccine. This new dose is a bivalent vaccine. Bivalent vaccines protect against two different strains of the COVID-19 virus. People aged 65 years and older and the immunocompromised may also get a second dose. Some people may need more doses. Talk to your doctor to learn what is best for you.

Here are some reasons why the updated COVID-19 vaccines are important:

1. Staying Healthy. Vaccines protect you against any new strains of the COVID-19 virus. They teach your body how to fight the virus.
2. Protecting family and friends. The virus can spread easily from person to person. But if you get the vaccine, you are less likely to pass the virus to others. It also helps to keep our loved ones safe. The updated COVID-19 vaccines also protect people with higher risk factors. These include the elderly, immunocompromised, and those with other health conditions.
3. Reduce COVID-19 spread. Vaccines help to reduce the spread of the virus. This keeps those around us safer. This includes people who are not able to take them for medical reasons.

Taking the updated COVID-19 vaccine is a great way to protect yourself and your loved ones. They help us to adapt to the changing nature of the virus.

Have more questions? Reach out to your program nurse!