



# Flu Shot

There are so many different opinions about getting the flu shot yearly. According to the CDC:

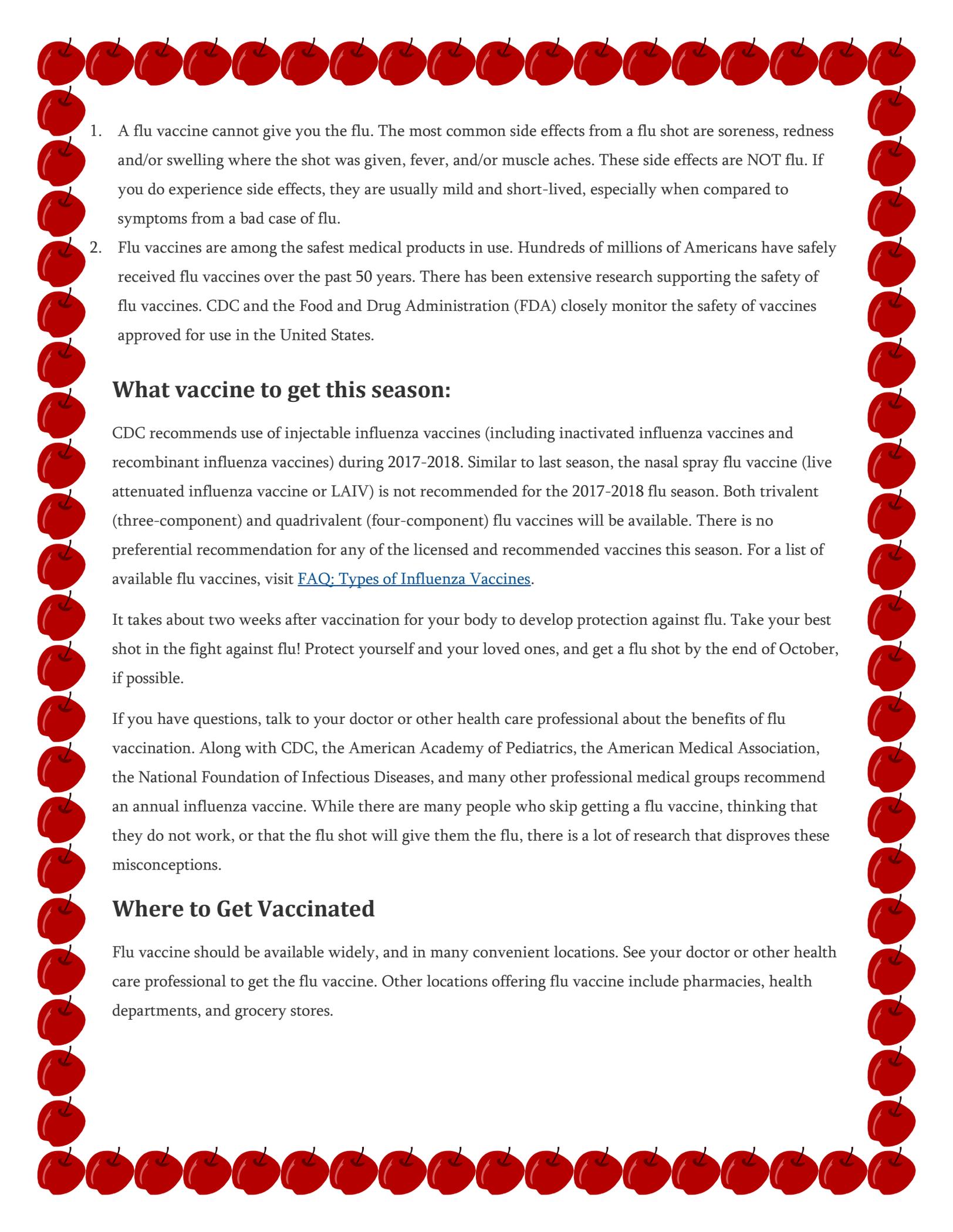
**Some people will only be mildly sick or miserable for a few days, but for some, flu can be very serious and may even result in hospitalization or death. The [CDC estimates](#) the flu has caused between 140,000 and 710,000 hospitalizations and between 12,000 and 56,000 deaths annually in the United States since 2010. Some people are at higher risk of serious flu illness. What is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from flu? Get a flu shot!**

Flu viruses infect the nose, throat, and lungs and can cause a wide range of complications. Sinus and ear infections are examples of moderate complications from flu. Pneumonia is a serious flu complication that can result from either flu virus infection alone or from co-infection of flu virus and bacteria. Other possible serious complications triggered by flu can include inflammation of the heart (myocarditis), brain (encephalitis) or muscle (myositis, rhabdomyolysis), and multi-organ failure (for example, respiratory and kidney failure). Flu virus infection can trigger an extreme inflammatory response in the body and can lead to [sepsis](#), the body's life-threatening response to infection. Over the past six flu seasons, the U.S. has experienced several flu seasons with high rates of hospitalization and severe disease.

Flu vaccination can help keep you from getting sick from flu. Protecting yourself from flu also protects the people around you who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness. People at increased risk of flu complications include older adults, people with chronic medical conditions, and children younger than 6 months old.

CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine each year. While the flu vaccine can vary in how well it works, it is the best tool modern medicine currently has to prevent infection with influenza viruses. CDC estimates that for the 2015-2016 influenza season only about [45% of the population were vaccinated](#). Still, influenza vaccination prevented approximately 5.1 million influenza illnesses, 2.5 million influenza-associated medical visits, and 71,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations. CDC experts calculated that a 5 percentage point increase in vaccination rates could have prevented another 500,000 influenza illnesses, 230,000 influenza-associated medical visits, and 6,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations across the entire population.

We have stated above that flu illness can be serious and that flu vaccine can prevent illness. There are other misconceptions that discourage people from getting vaccinated. To clear those up:

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1. A flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. The most common side effects from a flu shot are soreness, redness and/or swelling where the shot was given, fever, and/or muscle aches. These side effects are NOT flu. If you do experience side effects, they are usually mild and short-lived, especially when compared to symptoms from a bad case of flu.
  2. Flu vaccines are among the safest medical products in use. Hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines over the past 50 years. There has been extensive research supporting the safety of flu vaccines. CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) closely monitor the safety of vaccines approved for use in the United States.

### **What vaccine to get this season:**

CDC recommends use of injectable influenza vaccines (including inactivated influenza vaccines and recombinant influenza vaccines) during 2017-2018. Similar to last season, the nasal spray flu vaccine (live attenuated influenza vaccine or LAIV) is not recommended for the 2017-2018 flu season. Both trivalent (three-component) and quadrivalent (four-component) flu vaccines will be available. There is no preferential recommendation for any of the licensed and recommended vaccines this season. For a list of available flu vaccines, visit [FAQ: Types of Influenza Vaccines](#).

It takes about two weeks after vaccination for your body to develop protection against flu. Take your best shot in the fight against flu! Protect yourself and your loved ones, and get a flu shot by the end of October, if possible.

If you have questions, talk to your doctor or other health care professional about the benefits of flu vaccination. Along with CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the National Foundation of Infectious Diseases, and many other professional medical groups recommend an annual influenza vaccine. While there are many people who skip getting a flu vaccine, thinking that they do not work, or that the flu shot will give them the flu, there is a lot of research that disproves these misconceptions.

### **Where to Get Vaccinated**

Flu vaccine should be available widely, and in many convenient locations. See your doctor or other health care professional to get the flu vaccine. Other locations offering flu vaccine include pharmacies, health departments, and grocery stores.