



Flu and pneumonia

Having the flu or pneumonia can be dangerous. Luckily, simple vaccines can help offer protection for you, your family and your friends.

All about the flu¹

Flu, or influenza, is a virus that infects the nose, throat and sometimes the lungs. It spreads very easily when people with the virus cough, sneeze or talk.

Flu symptoms usually come on suddenly, and they can be mild to severe. Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Cough
- Body aches
- Chills

Who should get a flu vaccine?²

The first and most important step in preventing flu is to get a flu vaccine each year. The vaccine protects against the three or four viruses research suggests will be most common each year. Getting vaccinated can reduce your risk of getting sick, and even if you do get sick after being vaccinated, your illness may be milder.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), everyone over 6 months old should get the vaccine by the end of October each year.

All about pneumonia³

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs caused by bacteria, viruses and fungi. In some cases, pneumonia is a complication of the influenza virus.

The symptoms of pneumonia can be mild to severe. They may include:

- High fever
- Shortness of breath with normal daily activities
- Cough with phlegm that doesn't improve or gets worse
- Chest pain when you breathe or cough
- Chills
- Feeling suddenly worse after a cold or the flu



Flu and pneumonia

Who should get the pneumonia vaccine?⁴

It's always better to prevent pneumonia than to treat it. The CDC recommends two pneumococcal vaccines for adults 65 and older: a dose of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) first, and a dose of the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23) at least one year later.

Other tips for protecting yourself⁵

Vaccines do a great job of protecting you, but they cannot eliminate all the germs that cause flu and pneumonia. If you want to get the most out of your flu and pneumonia vaccines, try this added protection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water
- Try to stay away from sick people
- Don't smoke
- If you use water-free hand cleaners, use enough to get your hands thoroughly wet
- Practice good health habits—eat a healthy diet, get plenty of rest and stay physically active

Use this chart to write down when you got each vaccine.

I got a flu vaccine from:	
On this date:	
I'll need another one on:	
I got a pneumonia vaccine from:	
On this date:	
I'll need another one on:	

References

¹National Library of Medicine – MedlinePlus medlineplus.gov/flu.html

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/prevention.htm

³National Library of Medicine – MedlinePlus medlineplus.gov/pneumonia.html

⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/pneumonia/prevention.html

⁵American Lung Association

www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/pneumonia/preventing-pneumonia.html

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