





Thank you for being a Common Ground Healthcare Cooperative member!

Flu Shot Time Is Here!

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. During an average flu season, the influenza viruses can cause millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and tens of thousands of deaths. Many more people could be protected from flu if more people got vaccinated.

Did you know you may be able to spread flu to someone else before you know you are sick? That's one reason the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months and older (with a few exceptions) should get a flu shot each year. Even if you are not at high risk, getting the flu shot can help protect the people around you.

Who is most at risk for Influenza?

	People with long term health concerns	Flu can be a serious disease, particularly among people with certain chronic health conditions such as asthma, heart disease or diabetes. Any flu infection can carry a risk of serious complications, hospitalization, or death, even among otherwise healthy people. That's why getting vaccinated is a safer choice than risking illness to obtain immune protection.
	Adults 65 years and Older	New this season – the CDC recommends the use of higher dose and adjuvanted flu vaccines in people 65. This is preferred over the standard dose, unadjuvanted flu vaccines for older people.
	Pregnant Women	Getting a flu vaccination during pregnancy helps protect pregnant people from the influenza virus during and after pregnancy. The flu vaccine also helps protect your infant from flu in their first few months of life.
	Children (6 months to 8 years)	The CDC recommends that all children 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine. Most children will only need one dose of flu vaccine. Your child's healthcare provider can tell you if your child needs two doses of flu vaccine. Children who are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine can get it and a flu vaccine at the same visit.

For more information about the flu, visit the Frequently Asked Questions About Influenza (Flu) for the 2022-2023 Season on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2022-2023.htm>

What's the Difference Between COVID-19 and the Flu?

Now that fall is here and the kids are back in school, we have officially kicked off the cold, flu, and *COVID* season. As a result of one of the worst pandemics in history, we can rightfully add COVID-19 to the list of viral respiratory conditions that experience an uptick when the temperature drives people indoors.

COVID-19 and influenza (the “flu”) are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses.

- COVID-19 is caused by infection with a type of coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2
- Flu is caused by infection with influenza A and B viruses

Based on symptoms alone, it can be difficult to tell the difference between COVID-19 and the flu. Many of the symptoms are the same and both viruses can cause illness ranging from mild to severe. Predicting who will experience mild, severe, or even life-threatening illness is difficult. This is one reason that even the healthiest person should get COVID-19 boosters and yearly flu shots as recommended by their healthcare providers.

Common symptoms for both COVID-19 and Flu (This list doesn't include all possible symptoms)

People who are sick with COVID-19 or the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Fever or chills
- Headaches
- Muscle or body aches

COVID-19 common symptoms that are not generally associated with influenza “flu.”

- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell

Note – vomiting and diarrhea is more common in children with COVID-19 than adults

Did you know that flu can be dangerous? Every year people die from the flu, including otherwise healthy children and teens. People with increased risk include seniors and those with certain preexisting medical conditions like diabetes, asthma, heart problems, chronic kidney disease and cancer.

It's Not Too Late to Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19 and Flu

- **COVID-19 Booster** – Recommended for people aged 5 years and older if it has been at least two (2) months since their last vaccine dose, whether it was their primary series dose or an original booster.
- **Flu Shot** – Routine annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months and older (except for those with certain conditions such as severe allergic reaction to a component of the vaccine).

The best way to prevent flu and severe symptoms of COVID-19 is to get vaccinated

Good news! You can get both vaccines at the same visit and for **free** at any CGHC network pharmacy. Since the COVID vaccine often requires storage at very cold temperatures, we recommend that you call your provider's office or pharmacy to make certain they have both the COVID-19 and flu vaccines available for your visit. At CGHC, our goal is for all members to stay informed and healthy! For more information about finding a pharmacy, visit our website at <https://commongroundhealthcare.org/formulary/> and click on the “Pharmacy Network” button for a list of contracted pharmacies.