



## ***Gear Up Campaign Talking Points***

### **TOPLINE MESSAGE**

The Ad Council, AMA, and CDC are launching ***Get My Flu Shot***, the latest iteration of our annual campaign to motivate more people to get vaccinated against seasonal flu. **Getting an annual flu shot** is the best way to **reduce your risk of severe illness from flu and its potentially serious complications, as well as protect your loved ones.**

Go to [GetMyFluShot.org](https://www.getmyflushot.org) for more information, including where to **get a flu vaccine in your area.**

### **Key Messages**

- Getting a flu shot is one thing we all can do to help slow the spread of flu and help keep ourselves, our families, and our communities safe and healthy from flu.
  - **During most seasons, flu causes tens of millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and tens of thousands of deaths** in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
  - Getting vaccinated can help **prevent serious complications** of flu including hospitalization and even death.<sup>2</sup> Getting a flu shot also can **prevent lost time from work and added medical costs.**
  - ∅ CDC estimates that last flu season, which was the 2023-2024 flu season, there were at least 41 million flu illnesses, 18 million flu medical visits, 490,000 flu hospitalizations, and 25,000 deaths related to flu in the United States alone.
    - Fewer than half of all people in the U.S. received a flu vaccine.
    - Getting vaccinated against flu reduced the risk of hospitalization due to flu by about 40% in adults and 50% in children<sup>3</sup>.
      - Health experts strongly encourage Americans to get vaccinated before there is flu activity in your local area, by October ideally for most people to reduce the risk of flu and its potentially serious complications, which can lead to hospitalization and death.
- With creative PSAs, FAQ videos, and other resources, the ***Get My Flu Shot campaign*** urges people across the U.S. to get their annual flu shot this flu season— to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/30/the-flu-costs-the-us-economy-10-point-4-billion.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/2023-2024/vaccines-reduce-medical-visits.htm#:~:text=Specifically%2C%20flu%20vaccination%20has%20reduced,about%2040%25%20for%20vaccinate%20adults.>



- This year’s campaign features a PSA created pro-bono by creative ad agency Madwell.
- The lighthearted PSA highlights how antibodies produced by the body after flu vaccination work hard to protect the person vaccinated. Audiences are encouraged to gear up with a flu shot and learn more at [GetMyFluShot.org](https://www.getmyflushot.org).
- The PSAs will run nationwide in English and Spanish on TV, radio, social media, out-of-home, and digital formats nationwide in donated time and space. The creative and media strategy is designed to reach those who have not yet decided to get a flu shot this year, with a focus on reaching Black and Hispanic audiences.
  - Due to longstanding healthcare inequities that create undue burden and barriers, Black and Hispanic people are at higher risk of severe illness from the flu and are less likely to get flu vaccinations.<sup>4</sup>
    - Social determinants of health are the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age. These forces and systems include a wide set of forces and systems that shape daily life, such as economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, and political systems and opportunities for optimal health.
- **[CTA]** Get a flu shot for yourself and encourage those around you to do the same. Learn more at [GetMyFluShot.org](https://www.getmyflushot.org), including where to **get a flu vaccine in your area**.
- **[WHY PARTNER TOGETHER?]** The Ad Council, CDC and AMA have a rich history of working together on public health campaigns, bringing together the scientific and medical expertise of the CDC and AMA and the Ad Council’s ability to leverage the resources of the advertising and media industry to drive behavior change on a national scale.
- After you’ve received your flu vaccine, we encourage you to share your personal story and reason(s) for vaccination with family, friends, and throughout your circles of influence.
  - This is called being a trusted messenger. Trusted messengers can:
    - Effectively deliver vaccination messages and recommendations.
    - Validate the credibility of flu vaccine information.

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<sup>4</sup> [Flu Vaccination Coverage, United States, 2023–24 Influenza Season | FluVaxView | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccination-coverage)



- Address flu vaccine mis-and disinformation.
- Serve as a feedback loop among friends and family to address vaccine questions and concerns.
- **[WHY THESE AUDIENCES?]** *Get My Flu Shot* campaign was developed to reach those people who undecided about flu vaccination, including Black and Hispanic adults.
  - Due to longstanding healthcare inequities, Black and Hispanic populations are at a higher risk of severe illness from flu, in part because of disproportionately low rates of flu vaccination coverage
  - Compared to White adults, rates of flu-related hospitalization are:
    - Nearly 80% higher among Black adults
    - 30% higher among American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults
    - 20% higher among Hispanic adults
  - Some people identifying with these racial and ethnic groups might face barriers to affordable, quality health care, including access to health insurance, transportation to health providers, and child care; therefore, they might experience fewer opportunities for flu vaccination.
- **[ISN'T THIS LATE IN THE FLU SEASON TO LAUNCH THIS CAMPAIGN?]**
  - CDC recommends vaccination by the end of October, ideally. It's best for people to get vaccinated before there is flu activity in their area, but CDC continues to recommend vaccination of those not yet vaccinated beyond October, as long as the threat of flu remains. Flu seasons vary in timing and duration. While flu most often peaks in February, significant flu activity can last into May.
  - This campaign complements other outreach and education efforts by CDC, AMA, employers and healthcare professionals that are now underway.
- **[CAN I GET A FLU SHOT AND THE UPDATED COVID-19 VACCINE AT THE SAME TIME?]**
  - Getting more than one vaccine at the same time is considered best practice.
  - Yes, you can get more than one of the recommended respiratory vaccines at the same visit if you want. Or you can choose to spread them out.



- There are data supporting that getting a flu shot at the same time that you get a COVID-19 vaccine is safe .<sup>5</sup>
- CDC and AMA recommend flu vaccination and an updated COVID-19 vaccination to protect against influenza viruses and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. An RSV vaccine also is recommended to protect against severe RSV disease.
- A flu shot helps protect you, your family, and your community from flu illness and its potentially serious complications.
- COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you, your family, and your community from COVID-19, which can have potentially serious complications, including hospitalization and death.
- CDC recommends RSV vaccines as a single dose for everyone ages 75 and older and for people ages 60–74 who are at increased risk of severe RSV. If you are between 60-74 years old, factors that might increase your risk for severe RSV include chronic heart or lung disease, a weakened immune system, certain other medical conditions (e.g., diabetes with complications or severe obesity), and living in a nursing home.

### **Additional Key Flu Facts for the Campaign**

- **[WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A FLU SHOT?]** Flu shots are a safe and important way to protect yourself and your community from flu.
  - If you get a flu shot, you are less likely to get the flu and to need to go to a doctor’s office, urgent care, or emergency room.
  - You are also less likely to be hospitalized or to die from the flu.
  - Getting a flu vaccine during pregnancy can also protect the baby after birth for several months, when they are too young to get vaccinated for flu.
  - For people with heart conditions, getting a flu vaccine can reduce the risk of having a second heart attack.
- **[WHO SHOULD GET A FLU SHOT AND WHEN?]** CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older (with rare exceptions) get a flu vaccine this season and every flu season – ideally by the end of October, before the flu is spreading widely.
- **[WHAT KIND OF FLU SHOT IS BEST?]** There are many options for flu vaccines, including a nasal spray vaccine for some people (healthy, non-pregnant people between 2 and 49 years of age, specifically). For the 2024-2025 flu season, there are three flu vaccines that are preferentially recommended for people 65 years and older. These are Fluzone High-

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/answering-patients-questions-about-bivalent-covid-19-vaccine>



Dose Seasonal Influenza Vaccine, Recombinant Influenza Vaccine, and Adjuvanted Flu Vaccine.

This recommendation was based on a review of available studies which suggests that, in this age group, these vaccines are potentially more effective than standard dose unadjuvanted flu vaccines. There is no preferential recommendation for people younger than 65 years.<sup>6</sup>

- **[IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET FLU AND COVID-19 AT THE SAME TIME?]** It is possible to get more than one respiratory virus at the same time t’s especially important for people at higher risk of serious complications—and their caregivers—to get their recommended vaccines.
  - This includes people with underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, neurologic disorders, weakened immune systems, and diabetes.
  - Due to longstanding healthcare inequities, Black and Hispanic people are disproportionately affected by these underlying conditions.

#### **WHAT ABOUT GETTING THE NASAL SPRAY FLU VACCINE AT HOME?**

On September 20, 2024, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [approved](#) the nasal spray flu vaccine, FluMist, for self or caregiver administration. [FluMist is sprayed into the nose and is approved](#) for the prevention of flu in people 2 through 49 years of age. FluMist is currently available for administration by a health care provider in a health care setting (including a pharmacy) only. **The option for self or caregiver administration is not expected to be available until next flu season (2025-2026).**

#### **WHAT KIND OF RESPIRATORY DISEASE SEASON IS EXPECTED?**

It’s hard to predict how severe the respiratory disease season will be, but we anticipate that flu, COVID-19 and RSV activity will all occur this season. The best way to reduce your risk from these three diseases is to get up to date on your recommended vaccines. Last season, an estimated 25,000 people in the U.S. died from flu or related complications and 75,000 from COVID-19 during all of 2023, demonstrating how dangerous these diseases can be. According to CDC estimates, flu vaccination prevented approximately 131,000 hospitalizations and 7,000 deaths, and COVID-19 vaccination likely prevented at least another 40,000 hospitalizations.

#### **CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT DROPS IN FLU VACCINE COVERAGE?**

Less than half (45%) of U.S. adults received a flu vaccine during the 2023-2024 season, 2 percentage points lower than in 2022-2023 (47%), and 4 percentage points lower than in 2021-2022 (49%).

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### **WHAT ABOUT COVERAGE IN CHILDREN?**

In 2023-2024, slightly more than half (55%) of children 6 months to 17 years received a flu vaccine, and 200 children are reported to have died due to flu-related illness, surpassing the previous high of 199 reported in a regular flu season during the 2019-2020 season. Historically, about 80% of reported pediatric deaths have been in children who were not fully vaccinated, and this is consistent last season as well.

### **HOW WELL DO WE THINK FLU VACCINE WILL WORK THIS SEASON?**

Flu vaccines vary in how well they work depending on a number of factors. It's hard to know in advance how well the vaccine will work, but during most seasons when the vaccine components are like the flu viruses that are spreading, flu vaccine can reduce the risk of getting sick and needing to see a doctor for flu by 40 to 60 percent. In people who get vaccinated but still get sick, flu vaccine can make illness less severe, reducing the risk of hospitalization or death.