

2016 National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) Key Messages

Flu

- The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.
- People of every age, including people in good health, are at risk of flu.
- Influenza can cause illness and sometimes severe disease in persons of any age.
- Flu causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands or tens of thousands of deaths each year in the United States.
- Although a majority of hospitalizations and deaths occur in people 65 years and older, even healthy young children and younger adults can have severe disease or even die from influenza.
- About 100 deaths from influenza among children are reported each year to CDC.

Flu Vaccination

- An annual flu vaccine is the best way to protect against this potentially serious disease.
 - Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctor visits, pneumonia, need for antibiotics, missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations.
 - Flu vaccination also may make your illness milder if you do get sick.
 - Getting vaccinated yourself also protects people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain chronic health conditions.
- Despite the unpredictable nature of the flu, you should know:
 - You need the 2016-2017 flu vaccine for optimal protection against the flu this season because:
 - Flu viruses are constantly changing, and this season's vaccines have been updated to protect against the viruses that surveillance data indicate will be most common this flu season, and
 - A person's immune protection from vaccine declines over time so annual flu vaccination is needed for the best protection against the flu.
 - It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect against influenza virus infection.
 - While seasonal flu outbreaks can happen as early as October, flu activity is usually highest between December and February, though activity can last as late as May. As long as flu activity is ongoing, it's not too late to get vaccinated, even in January or later.
 - With flu activity increasing and family and friends planning gatherings for the holidays, now is a great time to get a flu vaccine if you haven't been vaccinated yet this season. A flu vaccine can protect you and your loved ones from the flu.
- Find a place near you to get a flu vaccine with the HealthMap Vaccine Finder (<http://vaccine.healthmap.org/>).
- Visit CDC's [Frequently Asked Flu Questions 2016-2017 Flu Season](#) to find out what's new for the 2016-2017 influenza season.

NIVW Key Messages & Free Resources

CDC has developed a number of tools and materials for organizations across the country to aid their vaccination efforts during National Influenza Vaccination Week.

- [About NIVW](#)
- [NIVW Communication Resources](#)
- [Frequently Asked Flu Questions 2016-2017 Season](#)