



Weill Cornell Medicine Pediatrics

8 Questions to Consider for the 2021-2022 Flu Season

Each flu season brings new questions and this season is no different with SARS-CoV-2 variants still circulating in our communities. [Dr. Christine Salvatore](#), Chief of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Weill Cornell Medicine, addresses new questions surrounding the 2021-2022 flu season.

Will we have a bad flu season this year?

It is still unclear; however experts are predicting a big rebound in flu cases in the 2021-22 season. Last year flu season failed to show up mainly because of the public health measures (social distancing, mask wearing, etc.) implemented to control the COVID-19 pandemic, which had the added benefit of stopping the flu as well. This year with the "relaxation" of these precautions the flu could make a comeback.

Why should I get the flu vaccine?

This year more than any year we should get vaccinated. In general, combining natural immunity and vaccination helps decrease annually the number of seasonal flu and especially severe flu. Due to last year's missed season the natural immunity has been waning significantly and this could place people, especially young children, at higher risk to get the flu virus; therefore if we don't have the natural immunity, then we have to rely on other "weapons" and overall, at this time the vaccine is our best weapon against the flu, and is recommended for everyone 6 months and older.

Will the flu vaccine make me sick?

The flu vaccine will not cause you to have the flu because both vaccines available contain either inactive virus (no longer infectious) or live virus, which however has been changed (attenuated) so that cannot give you the flu. However, like any kind of vaccine, there may be some side effects, which overall are mild; the most common are, for example, soreness, swelling or redness at the site of the injection, fever, muscle aches and headache. All these signs and symptoms will resolve within few days.

When is the best time to get my flu shot?

September until the end of October are generally good times to get the vaccine as the flu activity may be still relatively low in the community but can increase suddenly. The

body starts to build antibodies and protection against flu about 2 weeks after getting the vaccine; that is why it is important to get it during those months.

Where can I get my flu shot?

If you're a current patient at [Weill Cornell Medicine Primary Care](#), you can schedule an appointment easily through Connect. In addition to your primary care provider, flu vaccines are available at clinics; health departments; many pharmacies, schools and colleges; and employers.

Will the flu shot protect me against COVID-19?

No, the flu vaccine will not protect you against COVID-19, as the COVID-19 vaccine will not protect you against the flu. Each vaccine is designed to reduce the risk of flu and COVID-19 respectively.

Can you have the flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

Yes, but we do not know yet how frequent or common this is. As these are both respiratory viruses, the way of transmission is similar as the symptoms are and it is difficult sometimes to distinguish the difference between them unless you have a diagnostic test done.

Is it safe to get the flu and COVID-19 vaccine/booster at the same time?

Yes, from the data available there is no contraindication to administer the 2 vaccines at the same time; and this is true also if you are getting the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 booster. Like for many other vaccines that are given at the same time, the body responds with the specific antibody protection for each virus.