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Contact: Daisy Diaz, 703-253-4807
press@diabetes.org

Top health organizations urge flu and COVID-19 vaccines to protect vulnerable, reduce burden on hospitals

Yes, you can receive the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine in the same visit

ARLINGTON, Va., CHICAGO and DALLAS (Sept. 27, 2021) – With more people gathering this fall and reports of overburdened hospitals from COVID-19’s delta variant, the American Diabetes Association®, the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association are urging individuals over six months old to get their annual flu shot and for anyone who is eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccines can be given in the same visit.

COVID-19 precautions kept the last flu (influenza) season mild, but leading health experts warn that the 2021-2022 flu season may begin early and could be severe. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues, preventing influenza—which, with pneumonia, is regularly in the top 10 causes of death in the U.S.—is even more important to protect the health of people who are particularly vulnerable and to reduce the burden on U.S. hospitals, they say.

Flu and COVID-19 are both serious respiratory illnesses, and people living with chronic lung disease, cancer, heart disease and diabetes are at a higher risk for severe complications. Both the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccines are safe for people with chronic health conditions and are proven to provide the best protection against life-threatening complications from the two different viruses. As of Sept. 24, the CDC recommends COVID-19 booster shots for people in [certain populations](#) who received the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

“We encourage everyone over six months old to get a flu shot and everyone over 12 years old get a COVID-19 vaccine. This is especially important for health care workers and people who are at a higher risk for severe complications from the flu and COVID-19, like people over 65 and those living with chronic health conditions,” said Albert Rizzo, M.D., chief medical officer of the Lung Association. “Flu vaccinations have been in use for more than 50 years, with hundreds of millions of Americans safely receiving them, and more than [390 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccines](#) have been safely administered.”

“The best way to protect yourself and those close to you from a bad case of the flu and a severe bout of COVID-19 is to get vaccinated against each of them,” said Eduardo Sanchez, M.D., American Heart Association’s chief medical officer for prevention. “We know these vaccines work. We know



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these vaccines are safe. And we know you're much more likely to regret it if you don't get them than if you do. Please don't leave your health or your family's health up to chance when there are safe vaccines widely available in the U.S."

"People with diabetes have been particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic—with as many as 40% of all COVID-19 deaths occurring in people with diabetes," said Robert Gabbay, M.D., chief scientific and medical officer for the American Diabetes Association. "The flu is also significantly worse for people with diabetes and therefore, we strongly recommend getting both the flu and COVID-19 vaccines to protect your health if you are eligible. We need to all work together to keep our loved ones healthy."

The [American Lung Association](#), the [American Diabetes Association](#) and the [American Heart Association](#) offer educational resources about the burden of flu and increased need for vaccination among people with chronic health conditions.

Free, downloadable information on flu, COVID-19 and chronic health conditions is also available through the [National Foundation for Infectious Diseases](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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About the American Diabetes Association

Every day more than 4,000 people are newly diagnosed with diabetes in America. More than 122 million Americans have diabetes or prediabetes and are striving to manage their lives while living with the disease. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is the nation's leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic and help people living with diabetes thrive. For 81 years the ADA has been driving discovery and research to treat, manage and prevent diabetes, while working relentlessly for a cure. We help people with diabetes thrive by fighting for their rights and developing programs, advocacy and education designed to improve their quality of life. Diabetes has brought us together. What we do next will make us Connected for Life. To learn more or to get involved, visit us at diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Join the fight with us on Facebook ([American Diabetes Association](#)), Twitter ([@AmDiabetesAssn](#)) and Instagram ([@AmDiabetesAssn](#)).

About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous



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organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public's health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on [heart.org](https://www.heart.org), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/americanheartassociation), [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/americanheart) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

About the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. For more information about the American Lung Association, a holder of the coveted 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and a Gold-Level GuideStar Member, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: [Lung.org](https://www.lung.org).

Sources:

- CDC Key Messages 2021-2022 Flu Season: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm>
- MyShot toolkit 2020-2021 flu season
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines-work/effectiveness-studies.htm>
 - [CDC HCP Flu Fight Toolkit](#)
 - [Influenza \(Flu\) Vaccine Safety | CDC](#)