

Flu During COVID-19

Answers to Your Top 20 Questions

(script for the video at https://youtu.be/IA_19FjbxxE)

Slide 1

I'm your UnitedHealthcare Nurse Liaison, Amy Hertog. Let's talk about flu vaccinations. This year, we are in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic so getting a flu vaccination is crucial.

Slide 2

Who should get the flu shot?

It's recommended that everyone over 6 months old get a flu vaccine.

Slide 3

When should I get the shot?

The CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine in September or October so you will be protected before flu season starts.

Slide 4

Why bother? I never get the flu.

Getting a flu shot protects not just you – but other people that you could pass the flu on to. This includes your family, your co-workers, and anyone else in your life, especially those who are at high risk for complications.

Slide 5

How does the vaccine work?

The vaccine makes your body create antibodies that fight off infection if you come into contact with the live flu virus. Each year's vaccine contains the specific strains of flu virus that are predicted to be the most widespread. There are different vaccine types, including options for those with egg allergies.

Slide 6

Does the shot work immediately?

It takes about two weeks for your body to develop antibodies to the flu after getting the shot.

Slide 7

Can I still get the flu after getting vaccinated?

Unfortunately, the flu vaccine is not always 100% effective, but it's still the best way to avoid getting the flu. If you do catch the flu despite getting the shot, you will likely have a milder case.

Slide 8

Isn't flu just a bad cold?

The reality is that the flu can be deadly. Thousands of people die from flu-related causes every year. Pneumonia is a frequent complication, particularly for children, older adults, pregnant women and those with weakened immune systems.

Slide 9

Will the flu shot make me sick with the flu?

The flu vaccine cannot cause flu. The vaccines either contain inactivated virus, meaning the viruses are no longer infectious, or a particle designed to look like a flu virus to your immune

system. While the nasal spray flu vaccine does contain a weakened live virus, the viruses are changed so that they cannot give you the flu.

Slide 10

Does the flu shot have any side effects?

Sometimes it is possible to have a side effect from the shot such as a sore or swollen arm, low-grade fever, muscle aches, or a headache.

Slide 11

Do I need a flu shot? I got one last year.

You need to get a flu shot every year. Flu viruses change over time. This means last year's shot may not protect you from this year's illness. Also your body's immune response from vaccination declines over time so an annual vaccination is needed for optimal protection.

Slide 12

Could the flu shot increase my risk of getting COVID?

There is no evidence that getting a flu vaccine increases the risk of getting COVID-19.

Slide 13

Will the flu shot protect me from COVID-19?

The flu vaccination is for the flu and does not offer protection against the COVID-19 virus.

Slide 14

Aren't the flu and COVID-19 the same?

COVID-19 and flu are not the same illness but share common symptoms which can range from mild to severe. Common symptoms of COVID-19 and flu include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache, and
- Vomiting and diarrhea (which are more common for children than adults)

Slide 15

If I develop flu-like symptoms, how will I know if I have the flu or COVID-19?

The one discerning symptom for COVID-19 versus the flu is a new loss of sensation with taste or smell. But the only definitive way to tell if you have the flu or COVID-19 is to get tested.

Slide 16

Is there a test that can detect both flu and COVID-19?

The CDC developed a test that will check for seasonal flu viruses and COVID-19. Initial test kits were sent to laboratories in early August, and the CDC will continue to distribute these kits.

Slide 17

Can I get the flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

While this seems to be rare, it is possible to get the flu and COVID-19 in the same time frame.

Slide 18

How long does it take to develop symptoms with COVID-19 versus the flu?

If a person has COVID-19, it could take longer to develop symptoms than if they have flu.

Slide 19

How long can you spread the flu virus versus COVID-19?

For both flu and COVID-19, it is possible to spread the virus for at least 1 day before experiencing symptoms. However, if a person has COVID-19, they may be contagious for a longer period of time than if they had the flu.

Slide 20

Is a flu shot expensive?

Free flu shots are available for County group health members at your network physician's office, pharmacies, and convenience clinics. Employees on a different plan should check their coverage.

Slide 21

What if I don't have time to get a flu shot?

- Already out buying groceries? Get a flu shot while you are there.
- Got some errands at the pharmacy or convenience clinic? Book a flu shot appointment online and you won't have to wait.
- Planning to visit a doctor for other needs? Ask for a flu shot while you are there.

Bonus tip: Some retailers offer gift cards or coupons for getting your flu shot.

Slide 22

Let's recap. Get your flu shot now before Halloween if possible. There are so many good reasons:

1. Prevent getting sick with the flu (or at least reduce the severity)
2. Protect others from the flu including your family, co-workers, and anyone you meet
3. Reduce the risk of getting the flu and COVID which would really be awful
4. Lighten the load on our already burdened healthcare system

Slide 23

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/flu or contact me at (727) 464-5579 or amy_hertog@uhc.com

9/11/20