



Frequently Asked Questions about Flu Vaccines

Why should my kids get a flu vaccine?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics and Pediatric Services recommend that everyone aged 6 months and older receive a yearly flu vaccine. Children younger than 5 years old and especially those younger than 2, are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications. The influenza vaccine helps to prevent severe disease, pneumonia, dehydration, hospitalization, and death. Among children who died of influenza in the last 10 years, 80% of children had not been vaccinated. A study done in 2020 found that the flu vaccine reduced hospitalizations in children by 41% and ER visits by 50%.

Should my child get the influenza shot or the FluMist (nasal spray)?

- For most healthy individuals between the ages of 2 and 49 years old, either the flu shot or the nasal spray is a good option—the American Academy of Pediatrics considers both equally effective. However, FluMist is a live vaccine, so it's not recommended for certain groups of people. This includes being pregnant, having severe asthma or lung disease, or taking aspirin. You can learn more [here](#) about the FluMist. Children between 6 months and 2 years old can only receive the flu shot. Reach out to your provider if you have questions.

I'm a parent of a patient here at Pediatric Services-- can I get a flu shot here?

- Yes, you may. We can offer the flu shot for parents 64 years and younger and the FluMist for parents 49 years and younger without certain conditions (see above).

Can my child get the flu vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?

- Yes, they may. However, if your child is getting a FluMist vaccine, it must be 28 days since they received a different live vaccine such as MMR, Varicella (chickenpox), or MMRV vaccine in order to have an optimal immune response.

What are the common side effects of the flu shot or FluMist?

- Common side effects include soreness, redness, and/or swelling where the shot was given, headache (low grade), fever, nausea, muscle aches, and fatigue. Severe side effects such as allergic reactions are very rare.

Is the self-administered FluMist available to order for home use this year?

- While the FDA did approve it, it is not approved in the state of Minnesota this year due to local pharmacy laws.