



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Getting Vaccinated Against Flu More Important Than Ever**

SACRAMENTO – In an effort to prevent a “twindemic” of COVID-19 and seasonal influenza, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is urging Californians to get vaccinated against the flu now to protect yourself and your loved ones.

“Flu will be hitting your community soon, and in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in California, getting your flu vaccine will be more important than ever,” said Dr. Erica Pan, Acting State Public Health Officer. “Just like wearing a face covering, getting a flu shot is an easy and safe action we can take to keep ourselves and others healthy during the pandemic. Don’t wait—vaccinate.”

Flu vaccination is part of a comprehensive public health strategy to reduce the burden of flu, but also to preserve health care resources for care of patients with COVID-19.

Getting vaccinated is the best defense against the flu. In California, flu activity usually begins to increase in late November or December. It takes a couple of weeks after vaccination for the body to build an immunity. So, don’t delay getting a shot.

CDPH recommends the annual flu vaccination for everyone six months of age and older. Those at higher risk of getting severe flu disease include:

- People 65 years and older.
- People who smoke or have underlying medical conditions like diabetes, heart disease, asthma, lung disease, neurologic disorders, and weakened immune systems.
- Pregnant women and children under five years of age.
- African Americans, Latinx and Native populations, who are disproportionately affected by chronic medical conditions that can increase the risk for severe flu or COVID-19.
- Caregivers and residents in long-term care facilities.
- Essential workers who encounter others outside their homes.

“Flu can look very similar to COVID-19 and can cause a fever, cough, body aches, chills, and other symptoms. If you catch flu, you will likely have to get tested for COVID-19 and influenza. This could mean isolation at home until test results are back and indicate it’s safe to be around other people,” said Dr. Pan.

CDPH encourages Californians to contact their health care provider, physician’s office or clinic about getting the flu vaccine. When flu vaccine is in stock, adults can also get immunized at the pharmacy where they generally pick up their prescriptions. Pharmacies usually accept most insurance, including Medi-Cal. Some local health departments may also offer low- or no-cost flu immunizations.

Besides getting immunized, you can also take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs:

- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you or your child are sick for at least 24 hours after symptoms go away.

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, arm or disposable tissue. If you use disposable tissue, use hand sanitizer or wash your hands afterwards.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wear a mask.

For more information about the flu, visit [CDPH's website](#). For the flu vaccine location nearest you, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

For more information about what Californians can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19, visit [covid19.ca.gov](http://covid19.ca.gov).

[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)