

Flu, COVID-19, and RSV Vaccines: Common Questions and Concerns

It's normal to have questions about vaccines. Let's explore some of the most common concerns you may have about flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines.



FLU VACCINES

Do flu vaccines cause the flu?

You can't get the flu from a flu vaccine because flu vaccines either use a dead form of the virus or no virus at all. Some people who are vaccinated still get the flu after vaccination, but even if you get the flu, being vaccinated helps your symptoms stay milder.

I got a flu vaccine last year, so why do I need one again?

Flu viruses can change from year to year, so the flu vaccine is updated to help target the current strains of flu. You should get a flu vaccine every year so that you're protected against the latest flu viruses spreading in your community.

I never get the flu, so why should I get the flu vaccine?

Immunity from a flu vaccine or from having the flu gets weaker over time. Also, the most common flu viruses infecting people can change from year to year. Getting vaccinated makes your immunity stronger and gives you better protection from new or changing virus strains. If you do get the flu, there's no way to predict how bad your symptoms might be. But if you're vaccinated, then your risk of getting severely ill is cut nearly in half.

COVID-19 VACCINES

Do COVID-19 vaccines cause long-term side effects?

Most people have either mild side effects or no side effects at all after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Like with any medicine, rare but serious reactions to vaccines can happen. Data show that for every one million doses of COVID-19 vaccines given, five or fewer result in a severe allergic reaction. Since these reactions almost always happen quickly after vaccination, you may be asked to wait at your provider's location for 15 minutes so any reaction can be noted and treated if necessary.

Some people have been concerned about heart inflammation after a COVID-19 vaccine, but the risk of heart inflammation is higher after getting COVID-19 than after getting a vaccine. Long COVID, which is the condition that gives you lingering symptoms for many months after you've had COVID-19, is much more common than serious vaccine side effects. More and more data are showing that people who are up to date on their COVID-19 vaccine are less likely to get Long COVID than people who are not up to date.

What if I already got a COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 virus has changed a lot. The 2024–2025 COVID-19 vaccines have been updated to target the newest variants. If you're up to date with the vaccines, you're more protected from severe illness even if you get COVID-19.

Why should I keep getting COVID-19 vaccines?

COVID-19 is still around and still making people seriously ill, especially if you're 65 years old or older; pregnant; if you have a health condition such as heart disease, obesity, or asthma; or if you have a weakened immune system. Last year, COVID-19 hospitalized 900,000 people and killed 75,000 people in the United States alone, but being up to date on your vaccine helps protect you from COVID-19's worst outcomes.

RSV VACCINES

Have RSV vaccines been studied enough?

RSV vaccines were proven to work well to protect people from getting really sick from RSV in clinical trials. The most common side effects are a sore arm, lack of energy, and headache, and those symptoms don't last long. Severe allergic reactions are rare.

RSV can be very dangerous, especially for people 75 or older, or people 60–74 years old who live in a nursing home or have certain medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, or lung disease. It can make them have trouble breathing or develop an infection deep in the lungs. But an RSV vaccine helps protect you from serious symptoms. RSV vaccines are given in one dose so if you have already had an RSV vaccine, you don't need another one.

MULTIPLE VACCINES

Can I get more than one of these vaccines at the same time?

You can get more than one of this season's vaccines at the same time. You might have more side effects if you get more than one of these vaccines at the same time, but any side effects should be mild and should not last long. Some of the most common side effects are arm pain or swelling, headache, and fatigue.



Get started at vaccines.gov

**RISK LESS.
DO MORE.**
Get this season's vaccines



A campaign to increase awareness and uptake of vaccines for flu, COVID-19, and RSV in at-risk populations.

