

What is National Influenza Week?

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can make you very sick and can even be deadly.

December 6-12 is National Influenza Vaccination Week. If you haven't gotten your flu vaccine yet, now's the time! A yearly flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu. A yearly flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. Vaccination is especially important for those at high risk for serious flu complications, such as:

- Young children.
- Pregnant women.
- Adults 65 years and older.
- Anyone with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, and heart disease.

Signs and symptoms of flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms. They usually start suddenly.

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills.
- Cough.
- Sore throat.
- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Muscle or body aches.
- Headaches.
- Fatigue (very tired).
- Vomiting and diarrhea.

**Not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

What are the benefits of getting a flu shot every year?

- It can lower your chances of getting sick from flu. A flu shot also protects people around you who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness.
- It also may make your illness milder if you do get sick.
- It can reduce the risk of more serious flu outcomes, like hospitalizations.
- It's an important preventive tool for people with chronic health conditions.
- It helps protect women during pregnancy and their babies for up to 6 months after they are born.

Mobile apps

- [WebMD](#)
- [Everyday Health Flu Map](#)

Tips from our docs

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Pedro Cardona, MD**, our Medical Director.

The flu virus is spread from person to person in droplets that fly out when you cough or sneeze. Germs are also passed along when you touch mucus droplets from someone else on a surface like a desk and then touch your own eyes, mouth, or nose before washing your hands. Here are some ways to avoid catching and spreading the flu virus:

1. Stand a few feet apart from others.
2. Sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow.
3. Wash your hands with soap and warm water many times a day.
4. Avoid touching your face.

You can get your annual flu shot at your doctor's office, a pharmacy in the True Health New Mexico network, clinics, health departments, and college health centers. And remember, a flu shot is a covered benefit on your True Health New Mexico insurance plan!

More resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Influenza Surveillance Program](#)