

# Protect the Circle of Life



## THE FLU & YOU

### What is influenza (the flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness. At times, it can lead to death.

### Who should get a flu vaccine?

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine, especially if you are at high risk for complications, or if you live with or care for someone who is high risk for complications.

### Your family may be especially vulnerable to the flu.

Influenza poses a greater risk to certain people, including pregnant women, children, and elders, who are all at high risk for flu-related complications. In fact, pneumonia and flu are a leading cause of death among Native elders. The flu also can cause certain health conditions, including diabetes, asthma, and heart and lung disease, to become worse. Pneumonia and bronchitis are examples of serious flu-related complications, which can result in hospitalization and sometimes even death.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF THE FLU

People sick with influenza feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever\* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

*\*Not everyone with the flu will have a fever. You can be sick and contagious without running a temperature.*

## HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE FLU

- Get a flu vaccine each year.
- Stop the spread of germs, including influenza viruses:
  - ♦ Cover your coughs and sneezes
  - ♦ Wash your hands often
  - ♦ If you're sick, stay home
- Take antiviral drugs if they are prescribed for you.

**PROTECT YOURSELF.  
PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE.**

## The influenza vaccine is safe. You can't get the flu from the flu vaccine.

People have been receiving flu vaccines for more than 50 years. Vaccine safety is closely monitored annually by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Hundreds of millions of flu vaccines have been given safely to people across the country for decades.

The viruses in the flu shot are killed and the viruses in the nasal spray vaccine are weakened, so neither vaccine can cause the flu. A flu shot can have mild side effects, such as soreness or swelling where the vaccine was received, a mild fever, or aches. Mild side effects of the nasal spray can include runny nose, headache, sore throat, and cough. Any side effects you experience are not contagious to others and should disappear within 2 days.

## When should I get a flu vaccine?

It's difficult to know when flu activity will peak. So vaccination before December is best to ensure protection. However, even getting vaccinated in December or later can be protective because influenza disease can last as late as May. It takes 2 weeks after getting the vaccine for your body to develop an immune response against influenza.

## Why do I need to get a flu vaccine each year?

You need a flu vaccine each year because influenza viruses are always changing and immunity wanes over time. Each year, experts identify the influenza viruses that are the most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season. Your flu vaccine protects against those viruses. It does not protect against other viruses (such as colds or stomach viruses) or against very different influenza viruses not in the vaccine.

## WHERE DO I GET A FLU VACCINE

- **Your local healthcare facility (even if you don't have a regular doctor or nurse)**
- **Mobile and community-based immunization clinics that visit many locations**
- **Pharmacies and grocery stores where available**

**Ask your Community Health Representative (CHR) or Community Health Aide (CHA) for more information.**

### Local Information

#### **CHOCTAW HEALTH CENTER (601) 389-4300**

Flu shots are available in Primary Care Clinic and Diabetes Management Clinic on Monday-Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm Red Water Clinic, Conehatta Clinic and Bogue Chitto Clinic on Monday-Thursday 8:00am - 5:15pm

**THANK YOU FOR KEEPING  
INDIAN COUNTRY HEALTHY**



Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)  
or call 1-800-CDC-INFO

