

TALKING POINTS

Helpful Info When Having Conversations

Typically each year, over 100,000 Missourians become sick from the flu. Many Missourians of all ages become seriously ill and some are hospitalized. 2020 is anything but typical, and health officials are urging Missourians to get the flu vaccine.

This year it is more important than ever to get a flu vaccine due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to help save limited medical resources for COVID-19 patients.

Just like wearing a mask, getting a flu shot is an easy and safe action we can take to keep ourselves and others healthy during the pandemic.

Influenza and COVID-19 share many of the same symptoms. Preventing influenza means fewer people will need to seek medical care and testing for possible COVID-19 or influenza. Getting the vaccine protects you, your family and your community.

Flu and COVID-19 symptoms significantly overlap one another. Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea. Similarities and differences between flu and COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

The CDC estimates that flu causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and 12,000 – 61,000 deaths each year. While it is important to minimize this toll, it is especially crucial during the pandemic. A bad flu season combined with COVID-19 can put our front-line workers at higher risk for illness.

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Essential workers, including doctors and nurses, are doing their part to keep us healthy. We all have a part to play to ensure Missouri has the capacity to care for all patients, and we can help by rolling up our sleeves and getting vaccinated.

Everyone six months or older should get the flu vaccine, especially our most vulnerable community members. Anyone can get sick from the flu, people with underlying health conditions or children age 5 and under, and adults older than 65, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems or chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease are at high risk for flu-related complications.

While the effectiveness of the flu vaccine varies from year to year, studies indicate that some protection is better than none at all. You are less likely to spread the flu virus to those around you if you are vaccinated.

One action to take to protect yourself during COVID-19 is to get the flu vaccine. Little is known how a person could be affected by experiencing both viruses at the same time.

The flu shot is available at local pharmacies, health departments and provider's offices. Go to www.vaccinefinder.org to locate vaccination locations near you.