



# INFLUENZA IS SERIOUS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Why get a flu vaccine every year?**

Influenza, or the flu, is a viral infection of the nose, throat, and lungs. Symptoms can lead to pneumonia, bronchitis, and ear infections.

The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Flu vaccines only protect you for a single flu season.

Flu viruses change from year-to-year. Even though you received a flu vaccine in the past, future years flu viruses may be very different.

Talk with your doctor about getting a flu vaccine any time between August and May or visit [www.mo.gov](http://www.mo.gov) to find a flu clinic near you.

**Who should get the flu vaccine?**

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services recommends that everyone six months and older get the flu vaccine. It is especially important for young children, pregnant women, older people, and people with chronic health problems.

**Who is at higher risk for getting the flu?**

Infants, young children, pregnant women, older people, and people with chronic health problems are at a greater risk for getting seriously ill from the flu.

**Can I get the flu from the vaccine?**

No. If you are experiencing some of the common side effects associated with receiving a flu vaccine (stuffy nose, low grade fever, body aches, or fatigue), the body is likely starting to build antibodies against the flu. You aren't fully protected from the flu until two weeks after receiving the vaccine.

**If I had the flu already this season, am I protected for the rest of the year?**

No. While you may have developed immunity against the virus that infected you, it doesn't guarantee that you have immunity against other flu viruses that are circulating the same season.

**How long can I spread the flu to others?**

You can infect others one day before symptoms develop and up to seven days after becoming sick. Children may pass the virus for more than seven days.

Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body.

Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those people may still spread the virus to others.

**Remember, the flu comes on suddenly. Most people with the flu feel very tired and have a high fever, headache, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and body aches. Protect yourself and others around you by getting a flu vaccine!**

