



Protect against the **FLU**

New this year! Quadrivalent flu shots

FACT SHEET

WHO CAN GET A FREE FLU SHOT?

FREE flu shots are available for all Benefits eligible state employees.

FREE flu shots are also available for Benefit Options members (retirees and spouses) & covered dependents over the age of 4.

WHERE CAN I GET A FLU SHOT?

- ◆ Work-site clinics
- ◆ Benefit expo clinics
- ◆ Healthwaves public clinics

WHAT TO BRING:

- ◆ Employee identification number
- ◆ Benefit Options insurance card

Why Should You Get the Flu Vaccine?

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to extreme illness, hospitalization, and even death. Every flu season is unique, and while symptoms may be different from one person to the next, the outcome is always a significant illness. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated each year.

Why Do You Need a Flu Vaccine Every Year?

A flu vaccine is needed every season. First, the body's immune response from vaccination declines over time, so an annual vaccine is needed for optimal protection. Second, because flu viruses are constantly changing, the formulation of the flu vaccine is reviewed each year and sometimes updated to keep up with changing flu viruses.

Who Should Get Vaccinated?

All persons aged 6 months and older are recommended for annual vaccination, with rare exception. Flu shots are approved for use in pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions. Certain populations are at greater risk for contracting the flu. Talk to your doctor or other health care professional if you have any questions regarding which flu vaccine options are best for you and your family.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For a complete list of dates and locations, visit:
<http://benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness/>
or call 602.771.9355.

Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine FAQs

What is the quadrivalent flu vaccine?

The quadrivalent flu vaccine is designed to protect against four different flu viruses; two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses - providing broader protection than before.

Why was the quadrivalent flu vaccine developed?

Experts had to choose one B virus, even though there are two very different lineages of B viruses that both circulate during most seasons. This meant the vaccine did not protect against the group of B viruses not included in the vaccine. Adding another B virus to the vaccine aims to give broader protection against circulating flu viruses.

In the past, flu vaccines protected against only 3 influenza virus strains (influenza A H1N1 virus, influenza A H3N2 virus and one B virus). But there is a fourth strain that could also circulate during flu season, and the previous vaccines did not protect against it. That means even people who were vaccinated may have been under protected.

How does the flu vaccine work?

Flu vaccines are effective because they create disease fighting antibodies in the body about two weeks after the actual vaccination. Once these antibodies are created, they provide protection against the flu virus strands that are contained in the vaccine.

Experts predict which strains of the flu virus are likely to circulate in the population during the upcoming season. The viruses within the vaccine can change based on the estimation of which strains will cause illness from one season to the next. This is part of the reason why a yearly vaccination against the flu is required, rather than a single vaccine over the course of a lifetime.



When should I get vaccinated?

CDC recommends that people get vaccinated against flu soon after the vaccine becomes available, preferably by October.

It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu.

Is the quadrivalent flu vaccine safe?

Yes. Flu vaccines that protect against four flu viruses are made in the same way as the flu vaccines that have been around for years that protect against three flu viruses. The difference is the addition of another vaccine virus. The quadrivalent vaccine cannot cause influenza illness, because the vaccine viruses used to make it are 'inactivated' (killed) or attenuated (weakened).

Can the flu vaccine give me the flu?

No, a flu vaccine cannot cause flu illness, however there are different side effects that may be associated with getting a flu shot or a nasal spray flu vaccine. These side effects are mild and short-lasting, especially when compared to symptoms of bad case of flu.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention