Older Adults Should Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19, Flu and RSV

Respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19, influenza (flu) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), spread through coughing, sneezing, talking and breathing and are more common in fall and winter. There are vaccines to protect people against COVID-19, flu and RSV. If you are an older adult, get vaccinated as soon as possible to make sure you are protected.

What vaccines do I need to stay safe?
There are individual vaccines that protect against COVID-19, flu and RSV:
- You should get one dose of an updated 2024-2025 **COVID-19** vaccine. These vaccines have been updated to protect against current variants of the virus and strengthen your protection, which can decrease over time.
  - If you are moderately or severely immunocompromised, ask your health care provider if they recommend additional doses.
- You should get one dose of an updated 2024-2025 **flu** vaccine. These vaccines are updated annually to protect against the strains expected to spread.
- People who received an **RSV** vaccine last season do **not** need another dose at this time. Otherwise, you should:
  - Get one dose of an RSV vaccine if you are age 75 and older.
  - Talk to your provider about whether you should get an RSV vaccine if you are age 60 to 74 and at high risk for RSV due to certain medical conditions, including chronic heart or lung disease, or residence in a long-term care facility.

Why is it important for older adults to get vaccinated?
Older adults are at increased risk of getting very sick, being hospitalized, and dying from COVID-19, flu and RSV. Certain underlying medical conditions, such as chronic kidney, heart or lung disease or diabetes, increase the risk of severe illness from these viruses.

Recently in the U.S., about 70% to 85% of flu deaths, 50% to 70% of flu hospitalizations and more than 85% of COVID-19 deaths occurred among people age 65 and older.

Which brand of COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccines should I get?
People can choose which **COVID-19** vaccine brand to get, regardless of which vaccines they received previously.

People age 65 and older should get a high-dose, adjuvanted or recombinant **flu** vaccine because these vaccines work better in older adults.

People can choose which **RSV** vaccine brand to get.

Are there side effects from the COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccines?
For most people, side effects are mild and go away within a few days. Common side effects include soreness in the arm, headache, body aches and tiredness. You cannot get COVID-19, flu or RSV from the vaccines.

Where can I get vaccinated?
Ask your provider if they offer vaccination. There are also hundreds of sites around the city that offer vaccines, including pharmacies. To find a **COVID-19** or **flu** vaccination site, visit vaccinefinder.nyc.gov. You can also call 212-COVID-19 (212-268-4319) for help finding a COVID-19 vaccination site. To find an **RSV** vaccination site, visit nyc.gov/health/map.

Will my health insurance cover vaccination?
Medicare, Medicaid and most health plans cover COVID-19, flu, RSV and other vaccinations without a copayment or other cost-sharing. Make sure you go to a provider that accepts your insurance.

What if I do not have insurance?
Free COVID-19 and flu vaccines are available to people without insurance or with limited insurance coverage. To find a site that offers free vaccines, visit vaccinefinder.nyc.gov, click the "Any insurance" drop-down and see options for "no cost."

Can I get the COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccines at the same time?
Yes, you can get all three vaccines at the same time.

Can I still get COVID-19, flu or RSV if I have been vaccinated?
Yes. While the vaccines lower your risk of infection, you can still become infected, especially as more time passes since you have been vaccinated. However, if you become infected, the vaccines help reduce symptoms and the risk of complications, including hospitalization and death. COVID-19 vaccines also reduce the risk of long COVID (symptoms that last for months or longer after COVID-19 infection).

If you have symptoms, such as cough, runny nose, congestion, sore throat, fever or body aches, get tested. Many pharmacies and community clinics offer testing for COVID-19, flu and RSV at the same time. Medication is available for older adults with COVID-19 or flu, and treatment works better the sooner you begin. If you do not have a provider, contact NYC Health + Hospitals' Virtual ExpressCare at expresscare.nyc or 631-EXP-Care (631-397-2273).

What other steps can I take to protect myself from respiratory viruses?
In addition to getting vaccinated, follow these steps to reduce your risk of getting sick:
- Consider wearing a well-fitting mask in crowded indoor spaces. A high-quality mask, such as an N95, a KN95 or a KF94, offers better protection.
- Avoid being around people who are sick.
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Improve ventilation, such as by opening windows or using a portable air cleaner, or gather outdoors.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus, nyc.gov/flu and nyc.gov/rsv.