



# News Release

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## **Flu and COVID-19 vaccines offer the best defense for families and communities**

*Public health experts recommend the flu and COVID-19 vaccines for everyone age 6 months and older*

**OLYMPIA** – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is urging the public to get an influenza (flu) vaccine in addition to a COVID-19 booster this fall to keep themselves and others safe and out of the hospital.

In recent years flu activity was low due to the preventive benefits of social distancing, masking, and other COVID-19 precautions. Now that guidance and recommendations have relaxed, people are more active, mobile, and have returned to traditional gatherings. At the tail of the last flu season, Washington experienced an unusual late spring wave of flu.

With the start of fall, many adults have returned to in-person work and most children are back in school. These conditions could lead to an increase in flu or COVID-19 cases this fall or winter.

“Flu can be unpredictable and sometimes severe,” said Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, MPH, Chief Science Officer. “To protect your family’s health, getting vaccinated against influenza with a flu shot or nasal spray vaccine should be part of the fall routine for everyone 6 months and older. It’s also the perfect time to get up to date on [COVID-19 vaccines and boosters](#) too.”

Young children, pregnant people, [those with underlying health conditions](#), and people aged 65 and older are at high risk for flu-related complications. The flu is a highly contagious disease that can cause severe illness and lead to hospitalization and death – even in healthy, young people. Getting a flu vaccine reduces the chance of flu illness and protects individuals from serious flu symptoms. The flu shot can be safely given at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine or booster.

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Flu illness is more dangerous than the common cold for children, especially for children under 5 years old. Flu can be deadly in young children. About 80% of flu-related deaths in children are in those who were not vaccinated. Across Washington, the flu vaccine, and all recommended childhood vaccines, are available at no cost for everyone age 18 years and younger.

For weekly flu activity reports, educational materials, vaccine information, and other flu prevention resources, visit [www.KnockOutFlu.org](http://www.KnockOutFlu.org). For more information on COVID-19 vaccines, visit the [COVID-19 website](#).

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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