



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

October 29, 2019

**MEMORANDUM FOR: All Federal Employees**

FROM: Alex M. Azar II, Secretary HHS  
Dale Cabaniss, Director

Subject: Five Reasons to Fight Flu this Season

Flu season is here and an annual flu vaccine remains the single best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from flu. There are so many reasons why a flu vaccine is important. This year, we encourage you to get your annual flu vaccine and share your own reasons for getting vaccinated by using the HHS #WhyIFightFlu hashtag. Here are our top five reasons:

1. **Flu is dangerous.** The flu is different from the everyday cold. It can last 2 weeks or more and cause serious complications such as pneumonia. Seasonal flu is a serious disease that causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and tens of thousands of deaths every year in the United States. Although good health behaviors including proper etiquette for coughs and sneezes can help reduce the spread of flu, experts agree a flu vaccine is the best way to prevent flu.
2. **Flu vaccination reduces your chances of getting sick with flu or winding up in the hospital if you do get sick. Those who get a flu vaccine are less likely to get sick from a flu virus. This means reduced time lost from work and activities. And, if you do get sick, some studies have shown if you are vaccinated your illness may be less severe. This means more time for your loved ones and the activities you enjoy most.**
3. **Getting your flu vaccine could save someone else from getting seriously ill.** Babies and young children, pregnant women, people 65 and older, and those with certain medical conditions—are all at increased risk of complications from flu. Getting vaccinated reduces the spread of flu from you to them, which can protect your family members, co-workers, and all those around you. As the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Director of the Office of Personnel Management, we get vaccinated to protect our loved ones and to do our part to ensure the health and wellness of every Federal employee.

4. **Flu vaccines are safe.** Millions of flu vaccines have been given safely for more than 50 years. Your body's natural response to vaccination may result in common things like a little redness at the injection site or a slight fever, but these are usually mild and pass quickly.
5. **Flu vaccines are available through your health insurance and most workplaces.** You can take advantage of your Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan and get a flu vaccine at low or no cost. Most FEHB plans cover flu vaccines at pharmacies and retail stores, in addition to doctor's offices and clinics, with no co-pays when in-network. Your workplace may also offer flu vaccines onsite.

A yearly seasonal flu vaccine is recommended for everyone aged 6 months and older. In addition to flu, adults are at risk for a number of vaccine-preventable diseases such as pneumonia, whooping cough, and shingles. Ask your health care provider about other vaccines you may need when you get your annual flu vaccine. To learn more visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), take the **adult vaccination assessment tool**, or find out where to get vaccinated using the **vaccine finder**.

Thank you for your dedication to public service and for joining the #WhyIFightFlu efforts to achieve a healthier workplace and a healthier America