**U.S Public Health experts encourage you:**

**Do Not Skip Your flu vaccination**

Although you may have read that U.S. influenza cases haves declined during the ongoing COVID pandemic there are some explanations why this has occurred. People have

(1) stayed home and practiced social distancing when out of the home

(2) worn masks when in public

(3) increased hand washing using soap and water or an antiseptic gel

(4) increased disinfection within the home setting and in public facilities

These four factors have contributed to the reduction of exposure and transmission of influenza.

For 2021-2022 influenza season, the CDC recommends everyone 6 months & older should receive a yearly flu vaccine. Age appropriate influenza vaccines include:

* [**injectable flu vaccines, or flu shots**](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/flushot.htm)**.** These include:
  + Flu shots that are made with inactivated viruses.
  + One flu shot that is made without influenza viruses.
* A [**live attenuated influenza vaccine, which is given by nasal spray**](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/nasalspray.htm)**.**

There are many different flu viruses and they are constantly changing. The composition of U.S. flu vaccines are reviewed annually and updated as needed to match circulating flu viruses. Flu vaccines protect against the three or four viruses (depending on the vaccine) that research suggests will be most common.

**Dr. Hinman and his staff will help to determine which influenza vaccine is best for you.**

So when should you get your yearly influenza vaccination? The answer is **NOW**, and definitely by the end of October. **Getting vaccinated in July or August is too early, especially for older people**, because of the likelihood of reduced protection against flu infection later in the flu season. September and October are good times to get vaccinated. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating, vaccination should continue, even in January or later.

Flu signs and symptoms usually come on suddenly. People who are sick with flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

* Fever\* or feeling feverish/chills (NOTE: not everyone with influenza will have a fever)
* Cough
* Sore throat
* Runny or stuffy nose
* Muscle or body aches
* Headaches
* Fatigue (tiredness)
* Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.