

# Foil the Flu

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Influenza season generally begins around November and reaches its peak in January and February. However, cases of the flu have been reported on the University of Arizona main campus since the beginning of the fall semester.

The US Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting yourself against flu viruses. Contrary to some rumors, the flu shot cannot give you the flu. Below are key points about the annual flu vaccine:

- While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three to four viruses that research suggests will be most common that year.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine as soon as the 2017-2018 vaccines are available.
- Vaccination of people at high risk is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness and its complications.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include pregnant women, those with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease, and people 65 years and older.
- Children younger than 6 months are also at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. Caretakers for these infants should be vaccinated instead.

Vaccination is important for health care workers, and others who live with or care for people at high risk of serious flu illness. More information on the flu vaccine, including frequently asked questions and their answers, can be found on the [CDC website](#).

The best time for individuals to be vaccinated against the flu is as soon as possible after that year's flu vaccine becomes available. I would strongly encourage everyone to be proactive and try to avoid catching the flu this season by getting a flu shot when they become available this fall.

In addition to getting a flu shot, it is important that you protect your health during flu season. The following steps can help stop the spread of the flu virus and prevent a person from getting sick:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as these are easy portals through which germs (i.e., the flu virus) can enter your body.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer in order to rid them of germs.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your arm/sleeve when coughing or sneezing to prevent the spread of germs.
- If you get sick, stay home from school, work or social settings, and keep your distance from other people. This will help prevent others from catching your illness.

Please share these tips with your family and friends. Also, please remind them that adequate sleep and nutrition, plenty of water, physical activity, and effective stress management all contribute to stronger immunity and better health throughout the year.

Finally, Life & Work Connections is providing flu shot clinics on the UA campus this October. For a full list of dates and locations, click [here](#).