

Mayo Clinic Minute: What to know about this season's flu vaccine

November 2 2020, by From Mayo Clinic News Network



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Experts recommend that those who are 6 months of age and older get their flu vaccine this year and get it as early as possible. In this Mayo Clinic Minute, Dr. Robert Jacobson, a Mayo Clinic pediatrician,

discusses this season's influenza vaccine.

This season's influenza vaccine covers four strains of the flu virus.

"The injectable comes in two major types," explains Dr. Jacobson. "That is, we have a type that's good for children from 6 months through adults 64 years of age and a second type for [older adults](#) starting at 65 years of age."

For those who'd rather avoid the needle, a [nasal spray](#)—FluMist—is available this season as an alternative.

"It is designed for people 2 years through 49 years of age. It provides coverage for all four strains, just as the injectable does," says Dr. Jacobson.

However, he explains that the nasal spray vaccine is not an option for everyone. "It is a live vaccine, and because it's a live vaccine, we don't take risks with pregnant persons; we don't take risks with the immunocompromised," says Dr. Jacobson.

Whether people get the mist or the shot, Dr. Jacobson says he wants to stress the importance of getting vaccinated for the flu this season.

"I just want everyone to know that they can play a major role in this pandemic. In addition to masking, [social distancing](#), hand-washing, avoiding touching your face unless you've just washed your hands with soap and water, and also getting the flu vaccine. Get the [flu vaccine](#) now in preparation for reducing COVID-19-like symptoms, decreasing the confusion (between COVID-19 and the flu), and protecting your loved ones. Protect yourself," says Dr. Jacobson.

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Citation: Mayo Clinic Minute: What to know about this season's flu vaccine (2020, November 2)
retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-11-mayo-clinic-minute-season-flu.html>

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