



# Flu prevention may be more important than ever this year

## Reduce your flu risk at no cost to you with a flu shot

Flu season is right around the corner, and this year's may be unprecedented. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, health care experts are sounding the alarm on the importance of protecting against the flu.<sup>1</sup>

When it comes to the flu, there's no better way to defend yourself, your family, and your community than by making sure you receive a flu shot — and your flu shot is covered under your health plan at 100%. All it takes is a quick trip to the pharmacy.

### The benefits of the flu shot

Each year, millions of people — around 8% of the U.S. population<sup>2</sup> — become sick with the flu. The flu shot can help:

- **Keep you healthy.** The flu shot has helped prevent:<sup>3</sup>
  - 4.4 million illnesses
  - 2.3 million medical visits
  - 58,000 hospitalizations
  - 3,500 deaths
- **Lessen the impact from COVID-19.** Becoming sick with the flu can leave you vulnerable to a more serious case of COVID-19, leading to a potential overburdening of national health care systems.<sup>1</sup>
- **Prevent complications in people with chronic conditions.** The flu vaccine can reduce hospitalizations for people with diabetes and chronic lung conditions, and help lower the rate of cardiac events.<sup>3</sup>
- **Reduce how sick you become.** A flu shot can help decrease your risk of becoming ill with the flu by as much as 60%, and can help reduce the severity of the virus if you do become ill.
- **Protect the people around you,** including those who are at a higher risk for illness, such as babies, young children, older adults, and those with chronic health conditions.

- **Prevention<sup>4</sup>.** While having a flu shot is the best prevention against the flu, here are additional tips:

- Clean shared surfaces. Wipe down items such as telephones, keyboards, steering wheels, and doorknobs often.
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick. This will help to reduce the chance of becoming infected and sick.
- Wash your hands often and direct your sneeze or cough to your upper sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

### Protect yourself from the flu

Visit our website at [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com) or use the Sydney Health mobile app to find a pharmacy near you. Then, call ahead or visit the pharmacy's website for flu shot details — some pharmacies require an appointment.

<sup>1</sup> The New York Times: *Fearing a "twindemic," health experts push urgently for flu shots* (August 16, 2020): [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com).

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Key facts about influenza (flu)* (September 13, 2019): [cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Misconceptions about seasonal flu and flu vaccines* (September 1, 2020): [cdc.gov/flu/prevent/misconceptions.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/misconceptions.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Preventive Steps* (September 14, 2020): [cdc.gov/flu/prevent/prevention.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/prevention.htm).

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