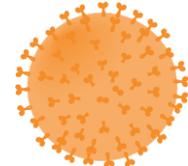# FLU AND COVID-19
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For more information about influenza and getting a flu vaccine visit www.sandiegocounty.gov/iz.

Are the strains in the influenza vaccine different this year?

Yes, the strains are different. There are many different strains of flu viruses and they are constantly changing. That is why the composition of the flu vaccine in the U.S. is reviewed every year and updated as needed to match the strains of the flu virus that are circulating that season. Learn more about this year's flu vaccines on the CDC's Frequently Asked Influenza Questions web page.

With everyone wearing face coverings, staying away from others, and spending most of their time at home, do we still need to get a flu shot?

Yes, it is more important than ever to get the flu shot this year. Anyone can get the flu, no matter how healthy they may be. The flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from flu. Getting the flu vaccine can make your illness milder if you do get the flu, reduce doctors' visits, the amount of work and school missed due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. The flu vaccine can also help reduce the burden on our healthcare system that is already responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, saving medical resources needed to care COVID-19 patients.

When is the flu vaccine available?

The flu vaccine is available now. You can get a flu shot through community or private healthcare providers, pharmacies, or community clinics. If you do not have a healthcare provider or health insurance, please call 2-1-1.

Before going to any provider, always call ahead to make sure the flu vaccine is available at that location and to find out about any qualifications for or restrictions to getting a flu vaccine.

Where can I get a flu shot?

You can get a flu shot through your healthcare provider, pharmacy, community clinic, or through the County of San Diego Public Health Centers.

Call 2-1-1 San Diego to get connected to a community provider if you don't have one or are uninsured. You can also visit our Flu Vaccine Locations page through the Immunization website www.sandiegocounty.gov/iz for a list of Public Health Centers, information about vaccination events and other locations where flu shots are available, including VaccineFinder.org to search for vaccination locations by zip code.

Before going to any provider, always call ahead to make sure the flu vaccine is available at that location and to find out about any qualifications for or restrictions to getting a flu vaccine.

What are the differences between the flu and COVID-19?

The flu and COVID-19 are both contagious upper respiratory diseases, but they are caused by two completely different viruses.

Many symptoms of the flu are very similar to COVID-19 symptoms and testing is the main way to tell them apart. Testing for flu and COVID-19 is recommended for people who have symptoms to confirm which illness they have. If you are experiencing flu or COVID-19 like symptoms, you should contact your healthcare provider for medical advice.

COVID-19 is a new virus and there is still much we need to learn about it. Information is always being updated as scientists and health professionals learn more about COVID-19.

Should I delay getting my flu vaccines until later in the flu season?

No. You should get a flu vaccine before the flu virus begins spreading widely in the community. It takes about two weeks after getting the vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu, so the sooner you get the vaccine the better.

We recommend making plans to get vaccinated early in the fall before or as the flu season begins. The CDC recommends that people get a flu vaccine by the end of October!

How does getting the flu vaccine help me fight a COVID-19 infection?

With multiple viruses circulating in our community this year, the risk of illness is even higher. While getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, it will help your body maintain a healthy immune system needed to fight other illnesses, such as COVID-19.

A flu vaccine provides protection against illness from the flu which can help protect against getting BOTH the flu and COVID-19 at the same.

Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine when I get my flu vaccine?

No, you are not able to get both the COVID-19 and flu vaccine at the same time or in the form of one combined vaccine that protects against both. The COVID-19 vaccine cannot be administered at the same time as any other vaccine.

How should I get my staff/residents/etc. vaccinated?

If your organization has a Human Resources department, you can check to see if it has a program to offer flu vaccines or has a list of flu vaccine providers.

If the individual (staff member, resident, etc.) has health insurance, that person can check with his/her regular source of medical care to find out about getting a flu vaccine.

Information about getting a flu vaccine is also available on the County of San Diego's Flu Vaccine Locations web page through www.sandiegocounty.gov/iz.

Visit the following websites for more information and resources about the flu:

- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention Influenza (Flu)**: www.cdc.gov/flu
- **California Department of Public Health Influenza (Flu):** https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/pages/immunization/influenza.aspx
- **County of San Diego Immunization Unit:** www.sandiegocounty.gov/iz