

FLU SHOTS FOR THE 2020 SEASON



This year it is more important than ever for players, coaches and essential personnel to opt-in to receiving the flu vaccine.

As we all do our part to mitigate the risk of COVID-19, getting your flu shot before the end of October is one of the most important actions you can take to keep yourself and your teammates safe. This year, the NFL and NFLPA are **strongly encouraging** everyone to get vaccinated.

// FLU AND COVID-19: OVERLAPPING SYMPTOMS¹



Influenza and COVID-19 have many of the same symptoms including fever, muscle aches, nausea, headache and congestion, which will make it extremely difficult to differentiate between the flu and COVID-19 until COVID testing can be administered.

SYMPTOM	COVID-19	INFLUENZA
Fever/Chills	✓	✓
Cough	✓	✓
Shortness of Breath	✓	✓
Fatigue	✓	✓
Sore Throat	✓	✓
Runny or Stuffy Nose	✓	✓
Muscle Pain or Body Aches	✓	✓
Headache	✓	✓
Vomiting and Diarrhea	✓	✓
Loss of Taste and Smell	✓	

NFL/NFLPA COVID-19 Protocols

Keeping players and personnel protected from COVID-19 is the number one priority of the NFL and NFLPA's joint protocols.

Given the fact that COVID-19 and the flu have many overlapping symptoms, it is extremely important to consider getting a flu shot this year to avoid being sidelined due to any of these symptoms.

Under the NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 Protocols, individuals exhibiting symptoms will be isolated and quarantined until testing can confirm whether the person is suffering from the COVID-19, the flu or some other illness.

If symptoms are from the side effects of the flu vaccine:

- Players and personnel who receive the influenza vaccine and exhibit mild symptoms such as a low-grade fever and sore arm within 12-48 hours do not need to be placed in the COVID-19 protocol, subject to the club physicians' discretion.



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Similarities and Differences between Flu and COVID-19](#)

// WHY SHOULD I GET A FLU SHOT?



Flu is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year, usually between October and May. Each year thousands of people in the United States die from flu, and many more are hospitalized. The flu vaccine prevents millions of illnesses and flu-related visits to the doctor each year. The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against influenza (flu) is to get a flu vaccine every flu season. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone six months and older get an annual flu vaccine.²



// WILL THE FLU SHOT AFFECT MY ABILITY TO PLAY?

No. It is common to experience mild symptoms after receiving the vaccine such as soreness, redness, and swelling where shot is given, fever, muscle aches, and headache. The influenza vaccine **does not cause flu**.³



// IS THE FLU VACCINE EFFECTIVE?

While vaccine effectiveness can vary each year, recent studies show that flu vaccination **reduces the risk of flu illness by between 40% and 60%** among the overall population during seasons when most circulating flu viruses are well-matched to the flu vaccine. In addition, if you do become sick with the flu after vaccination, your symptoms will be greatly reduced.⁴



// COMMON MYTH: "I NEVER GET SICK; I DON'T NEED TO GET A FLU SHOT"

Even if you do not develop severe or classic flu symptoms (for example, fever, cough, muscle or body aches, sore throat, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, or headache), you can transmit flu to others⁵, just like you can with COVID-19.

2020 Flu Shot Distribution

While the flu shot is not mandatory, **it is strongly encouraged this season** as we are all doing our part to stay in the game during the coronavirus pandemic. Over the next few weeks, keep in mind the following:

- Reach out to your club medical staff or coaches to learn when your club is offering flu shots.
- Flu shots are typically distributed during Bye Weeks, or as far away from gameday as possible.
- Your club medical staff are a resource for you at any time, reach out to them with questions or concerns about receiving your flu shot this year.
- Encourage your family to participate; flu shots are FREE under your club medical insurance and widely available.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Inactivated Influenza VIS](#)

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Inactivated Influenza VIS](#)

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Vaccine Effectiveness: How Well Do the Flu Vaccines Work?](#)

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Vaccine Effectiveness: How Well Do the Flu Vaccines Work?](#)

