



## Flu-Fighting Facts

(NAPSA)—The flu is nothing to sneeze at. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza has resulted in between 9.2 million and 35.6 million illnesses annually since 2010. The best way to stay out of such statistics, the CDC says, is for everyone who is eligible and at least 6 months old to get a flu shot as soon as the vaccine becomes available.

To help, all CVS Pharmacy and MinuteClinic locations have the vaccine available seven days a week with no appointment needed.

### Study Shows

That may be just as well, since the annual survey, conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CVS Pharmacy [1], found that two-thirds of those surveyed get a flu vaccine every year or plan to get one this year, a 5 percent increase from last year.

One reason so many are flocking to get the shot is the knowledge of last year's flu season—which according to the CDC had flu levels that were the highest observed since 2009. Twenty-two percent of those surveyed [2] say that knowledge of last year's severe flu season makes them more likely to get a flu shot this year. On a similar note, among the 27 percent of parents of children under 18 whose child did not get the flu vaccine last year, 26 percent say they are more likely to get their child vaccinated this year after learning about the notably high flu levels during last year's flu season.

The percentage who get vaccinated at a pharmacy stayed at 22 percent, but the percentage of employed adults who get vaccinated at their workplace fell from 22 percent to 15 percent while those who got vaccinated by a health care professional rose from 44 percent to 48 percent.

The survey also found that doctors' opinions (39 percent), where insurance is accepted (38 percent), and convenience (33 percent) rank among the top three factors in determining where to go for the shot. The flu vaccine is a preventive service under the Affordable Care Act, so it's fully covered and available at no cost through most insurance plans, including Medicare Part B.

### Nurse's Advice

“Surprising to many, it can actually



**The best way to protect yourself and your family from the ravages of influenza is to get a flu shot.**

take up to two weeks for the flu vaccine to build immunity,” explained Angela Patterson, Chief Nurse Practitioner Officer at MinuteClinic. “Because of this, CVS Pharmacy recommends patients get their flu shot as soon as the vaccine becomes available to ensure patients are the most protected before flu season peaks. Furthermore, influenza strains tend to change each year, so it's very important to get vaccinated annually to make sure you are protected.”

### What Else You Can Do

Here are four suggestions:

1. Stay home if you're sick. The survey found that two out of three respondents would still go to work if they had flulike symptoms.

In fact, flulike symptoms haven't stopped some people from going out in public in general:

- 28 percent have gone to the supermarket
- 12 percent have picked up a child from school or day care
- 10 percent have taken public transportation.

2. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based cleansing gel.

3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

4. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.

### Learn More

Consumers can visit [www.CVS.com](http://www.CVS.com) and [www.MinuteClinic.com](http://www.MinuteClinic.com) for further information and to find a nearby pharmacy or clinic. Customers get a \$5 off \$25 coupon when they get the shot at CVS Pharmacy or MinuteClinic.

[1] Survey was conducted in the United States by The Harris Poll on July 12-16, 2018, among 2,020 adults ages 18 and older.

[2] U.S. adults surveyed who did not get a flu shot last year.