

Health Awareness

What to Know This Flu Season: Testing, Treatment and Trusted Advice

(NAPS)—Flu symptoms are often coupled with uncertainty. What steps can you take if you start feeling sick? Is it really the flu, or something else? And what products are available to help support symptom relief? Having clear answers and knowing where to get help can make the process easier to manage. With more than 9,000 locations nationwide, CVS Pharmacy® can help by providing convenient options for prevention and care all in one place.

What to do if you suspect you have the flu

When symptoms arise, it's not always easy to know what's behind them. Because flu, COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses share common symptoms, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), testing is typically the best way to get clarity. At CVS Pharmacy, patients can purchase a 3-in-1 COVID-19 and flu test over the counter at any location. In-store testing, however, is available at select locations across 38 states. In some states, pharmacists may also prescribe treatment during the same visit, helping you begin care right away.

Finding relief when you're sick

Getting diagnosed early means you can also start treatment sooner if eligible. According to the CDC, antiviral medications may be prescribed to help shorten the duration and severity of the flu. But feeling better often starts with everyday health habits. When symptoms such as fever, cough or congestion arise, over-the-counter (OTC) products can support symptom relief. CVS Pharmacy carries a wide selection of flu care essentials, including cold and flu symptom relief support products, immune system support supplements and disinfectant cleaning products, making it simple to get what you need when you're under the weather. Pairing these with healthy routines can help you recover more comfortably.

In addition to OTC treatments, you can take everyday actions, the CDC advises, to help stop the spread of germs. Remember to:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wash your hands often with soap and water



Now is the time to fight the flu. Fortunately, it can be fast and easy to get a flu shot.

- Minimize touching your eyes, nose and mouth

Vaccination is still the best protection

Even with testing and treatment available, the first and most important step to prevent flu is to get a flu vaccine each year. This is the best way to help protect yourself and your family from the flu and its potentially serious complications, says the CDC. Different strains of the flu circulate each season, the CDC adds, so don't assume that if you have already had the flu, you will not get it again. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reports that even if you have already had the flu this season, you should still make it a priority to receive the flu shot.

The CDC recommends that individuals make plans to get vaccinated before flu season begins, and preferably no later than the end of October, making now an important time to get your flu shot. While it's preferable to get a flu vaccine by the end of October, people can get vaccinated as long as flu viruses pose a threat to the community.

The bottom line

From annual flu shots to testing, treatment, OTC essentials and pharmacist guidance, CVS Pharmacy offers resources to help you prepare for and manage flu in a trusted community destination.

Whether you're looking for answers or relief, the right support is close to home. Vaccine appointments can be scheduled anytime at CVS.com or through the CVS Health app—or you can simply walk into your nearest location.

In addition to vaccines, you'll find a wide range of services and products to support your health, so you can feel your best.