



Office of the Archbishop
835 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2030
312.534.8230
archchicago.org

September 20, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The recent escalation of COVID-19 cases in Illinois is a source of frustration for us all, particularly if we know someone who has been stricken by this virus or has even died from it. Even more disturbing is that with the change of seasons we now are entering a new flu season, which is leading some health officials to warn of a “twindemic.”

It is out of a concern for you and your families that I write to encourage everyone to get the COVID-19 and flu vaccines. While one vaccine does not protect both viruses, neither do the vaccines interfere with each other. It is safe to receive both vaccines and in some cases your health care provider or local pharmacy can provide both in one visit.

The Catholic Church has been a consistent voice in defense of human life and that must continue in this moment. Everyone at the Archdiocese of Chicago, from pastors to administrators, teachers, principals and custodial staff, has been working hard during the pandemic to ensure that our churches and schools operate safely. We must go that extra step now. Ideally, everyone should be vaccinated for the flu by the end of October.

According to the public health officials, additional considerations for groups of people include:

- Children should be vaccinated as soon as possible. Some children need two doses of flu vaccine. For those children it is recommended to get the first dose as soon as vaccine is available, because the second dose needs to be given at least four weeks after the first.
- Women who are in the third trimester of pregnancy can be vaccinated for the flu, since doing so will help protect their infants during the first months of life when they are too young to be vaccinated.

Common flu symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat and extreme fatigue are similar to COVID-19 symptoms. Our health care providers are already overwhelmed by patients infected with the coronavirus, or people mistaking one infection for the other.



Flu Vaccine
September 20, 2021
Page Two

Influenza can be, in itself, a deadly illness. More than 200,000 Americans are hospitalized each year with the flu and, while most people recover completely in one to two weeks, some develop potentially life-threatening complications such as pneumonia.

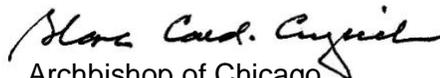
Over the past decade, influenza and pneumonia have been linked to an annual average of 3,500 deaths in Illinois, alone.

Nobody likes getting shots, especially children. But the flu shot is easy to find, inexpensive and recommended for just about everyone, even children over the age of six months. Most insurance plans and public health clinics or pharmacies provide a flu vaccine. I encourage you to contact your health care provider to determine which flu vaccine is right for you.

This week I will roll up my sleeve for the flu vaccination and I encourage you to do the same in order to protect yourselves, your families and your neighbors. It is a small but heroic thing to do. You may just save a life. At the least, you will help make this flu season less deadly for our community.

My prayers are with all of you, and I ask that you pray for me.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Archbishop of Chicago