



San Francisco Department of Public Health

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City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

SAN FRANCISCANS URGED TO GET FLU VACCINES AHEAD OF HOLIDAY SEASON

With influenza season beginning in November, San Franciscans should add a flu vaccine on top of their COVID-19 vaccine or booster, if eligible, for a safer and healthier holiday season.

San Francisco, CA - The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH) strongly recommends that everyone ages 6 months and older get a flu vaccine to safeguard their health, as November brings the start of flu season that will overlap with COVID-19 this year.

Last year's flu season was relatively mild, as people significantly reduced contact with each other and masked during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. While it's still unknown how severe this year's flu season will be, people are returning to many social activities. With increased contact during the holiday season, people could easily spread influenza. San Franciscans can prepare for the combined circulation of flu and COVID-19, which have many of the same symptoms, by vaccinating against both.

"Vaccines are our best defense against COVID-19, and they are our best defense against influenza," said Director of Health, Dr. Grant Colfax. "We urge every eligible San Franciscan to get vaccinated against both viruses so we have a healthier holiday season where we can be together safely. After all we have been through this past year and a half, we deserve it."

With flu and COVID-19 vaccinations widely available across health care systems, pharmacies, and the San Francisco Health Network, among other locations, every eligible San Franciscan should be able to access vaccines at free or reduced cost. Adding to the convenience, the flu vaccine can be safely administered at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine, or the Pfizer-BioNTech booster.

COVID-19 boosters for Pfizer recipients are now recommended for higher risk individuals, including people age 65 and over, people who live in long term care facilities, and people age 50 and older who have underlying medical conditions. The boosters strengthen the immune system against the disease and can be administered at 6 months past the second dose of the primary series. SFPDH expects to have guidance for Moderna and Johnson & Johnson boosters in the coming weeks.

"The flu and COVID-19 vaccines or boosters are readily available at drop in sites across the City. They also represent a great opportunity to connect back to your health care provider and address some of your health care needs that were put on hold during the pandemic," said Colfax. "Now's the time to improve all aspects of our health and wellness, from routine preventative care to chronic health issues that need a treatment plan."



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It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body to build immunity against flu, so now is the time to get vaccinated to maximize protection during the flu season. In addition to protecting oneself, loved ones, and the community by getting the flu vaccine, people should also stay at home when sick, practice good hand hygiene, and maximize fresh air.

More information about the flu vaccine can be found [here](#). More information about COVID-19 primary dose vaccine series can be found [here](#) as well as a [list of vaccination sites](#) in the City. Information about COVID-19 boosters can be found [here](#).

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