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## Get flu, pneumonia shots as directed

### Are they really necessary?

It's just the flu, after all. Nothing simple bed rest and liquids can't cure, right?

And pneumonia: It might take some time and antibiotics. But it, too, is treatable, right?

Not quite. There's more to it than that.

### Talk to your doctor

He or she is your best resource for what you and your family need. The doctor will tell you if you should get one, both or none of these vaccines.

### The flu vaccine

It guards against the flu, a **virus** that can cause respiratory infection.

The flu spreads quickly. It can strike large amounts of people in a short period of time. And it can lead to pneumonia and other complications.

This is why the health community urges most people to get the flu vaccine. It protects you, those you come in contact with and the community at large.

**The flu vaccine comes in two forms** — an injection (shot) and nose spray. Your doctor will tell you which one is right for you.

### Best to get the vaccine:

- **Every year.** That's because the virus that causes the flu changes its form. The vaccine you get each year is new. Developers update it to protect against the new strains.
- **In October or November.** But getting it in December and January also affords protection since flu season can last as late as May.

### The pneumonia shot

It protects against pneumococcal disease. Pneumococcus is a **bacteria** that can cause:

- Pneumonia (infection in the lungs)
- Bacteremia (infection in the blood)
- Meningitis (infection in the coverings of the brain and spinal column)

These infections are serious and can be deadly. Most at risk are infants and toddlers, adults over age 65, and people with certain medical conditions.

Get the pneumonia shot only if your doctor recommends it.

**Find out more about flu and pneumonia shots.** Visit the Aetna IntelliHealth® website at [www.intelihealth.com](http://www.intelihealth.com).

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