

## The Importance of Getting Vaccinated

By Sheldon Riklon, M.D.

Over the holiday season, flu activity spiked, and some Arkansans lost their lives. The COVID-19 virus is still present and continues to affect people. Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu, COVID-19 and other diseases.

### Five Reasons to Get Vaccinated

#### 1. Vaccines Save Lives

Routine vaccinations have reduced diseases and illnesses that are harmful or deadly.

#### 2. Vaccines Help to Protect You and Your Family

Vaccines help your body create antibodies that help to fight off infections. By getting vaccinated, you can protect yourself and help to avoid spreading diseases.

#### 3. Vaccines Help to Prevent Serious Illness

Some people have a higher risk of severe complications if they get sick from the flu or COVID-19 viruses. People aged 65 and older, anyone with a chronic medical condition, pregnant women and children may have a harder time recovering. Getting a yearly flu and COVID-19 shot helps to reduce the severity of illness if you do get sick.

#### 4. Vaccines Are Safe

The flu and COVID-19 vaccines are safe and recommended for everyone 6 months and older.

#### 5. Staying Up to Date on Vaccinations

The flu and COVID-19 viruses can change over time, so getting yearly vaccines will give you the best protection against new strains.

Most insurance plans will cover the flu and COVID-19 vaccines. You can get one at your local health department, pharmacy or doctor's office. Vaccines may also be available at certain mobile health events from the UAMS Institute for Community Health Innovation. Learn more at [communityhealth.uams.edu](https://communityhealth.uams.edu).

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