

# UW Health: Experts want to eliminate flu vaccine disparities

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MADISON, Wis. – We are entering respiratory disease season with COVID-19 rates surging and flu cases expected to arrive soon. UW Health experts urge everyone to get an influenza vaccine as soon as possible.

As we see COVID-19 disproportionately impacting Black, Latinx and Indigenous people, we are reminded of the importance of ensuring everyone gets a flu shot to protect against severe influenza outcomes.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, significant disparities exist for flu vaccination coverage. During the 2018-2019 flu season, the CDC found almost 49 percent of white adults received the flu vaccine, while only about 44 percent of Asian adults, 39 percent of Black adults, 37 percent of Hispanic adults, and 38 percent of Indigenous adults received the vaccine. There are many factors driving these disparities, including distrust in the health care system, safety concerns and lower rates of health coverage or access to health care.

Myths about the flu vaccine also continue to be pervasive. As we have covered previously when [busting seven flu myths](#), a person cannot get influenza from the vaccine, and everyone six months and older, even healthy adults, should get the flu vaccine every year because influenza, and therefore the vaccine, changes every year. It is also not too late to get the vaccine! The flu season often peaks in January or February and can last until May, so it is important to get the vaccine as soon as possible.

In addition to getting the flu vaccine, UW Health experts urge everybody to follow other public health measures: wear your mask, stay home if possible, especially when sick, cover your cough and practice hand hygiene.

Visit [uwhealth.org/flu](http://uwhealth.org/flu) for more information.

Interviews with Dr. Jasmine Zapata are available.