



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
Governor

DAVID R. SCRASE, M.D.
Acting Cabinet Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2022

Department of Health recommends flu vaccines and Omicron boosters this fall season 2022

SANTA FE- The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) strongly recommends getting vaccinated for both the flu and staying up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters.

Flu is a respiratory illness most often spread by coughing and sneezing. Flu is a mild illness for most infected people but may lead to serious complications, including pneumonia. These complications can result in hospitalization and even death for at-risk populations. Getting vaccinated for flu season will mitigate the effects of both flu and COVID-19 spread.

“Last Friday I got my flu vaccine and Omicron booster at the same time,” said **David R. Scrase, M.D., acting DOH secretary**. “Fall is here, and cooler weather is on the horizon, it’s time to think about flu and COVID-19 risks. We spend more time indoors this time of year creating more opportunities for viruses to spread. To protect yourself and loved ones, I strongly encourage you get your flu shot and to stay up-to-date on your COVID vaccinations and boosters and remember face masks work significantly well in protecting against respiratory illnesses.”

It is safe to receive both flu vaccine and Omicron booster at the same time. Public Health Offices and pharmacies will be offering the vaccines free of charge.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all people 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu, with rare exceptions. You can find a flu vaccine in your area at: [vaccines.gov/find-vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/flu/).

The CDC also recommends everyone who has completed their primary series or received their last booster dose at least two months prior, receive an updated COVID-19 booster, with protection against the Omicron variant. Omicron boosters are manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna and are available. Visit: [ItsTimeNM.org](https://www.ItsTimeNM.org) to schedule an appointment.

- Pfizer Omicron booster for people age 12 and older.
- Moderna Omicron booster for adults age 18 and older.

Flu season in the United States is generally from October to April, with peaks in January and February. While ideally it is recommended to get vaccinated in

September or October, vaccination after October still provides protection during the peak of flu season.

Other than getting vaccinated, how can we protect ourselves and communities from flu? Taking precautions such as frequent handwashing, covering your coughs and sneezes and staying home when you feel sick can prevent the spread of flu.

At-risk groups include those who are 65 and older, American Indian and Alaska Natives and pregnant women and infants. These groups should sign up to receive their flu shots in September or early October. Flu vaccines are available at pharmacies and public health offices throughout the state.

For more information about flu in New Mexico, visit the flu vaccination page on nmhealth.org. Additional information about COVID-19 and vaccines can be found at <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

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NMDOH

Trevor Dermody, Communications Specialist | trevor.dermody@state.nm.us

The Department of Health works to promote health and wellness, improve health outcomes, and deliver services to all New Mexicans. As New Mexico's largest state agency, DOH offers public health services in all 33 counties and collaborates with 23 Native American tribes, Pueblos and nations.