



## BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama

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### **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama Encourages Alabamians to Get a Flu Shot From Their Physician or Local Pharmacy**

**BIRMINGHAM, AL** – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama cares about you and your family’s health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), getting a flu vaccine every year is the best way to protect yourself and your family from flu and its potentially serious complications. The CDC recommends that everyone six months and older get vaccinated by the end of October.

According to the CDC, viruses circulate at higher levels in the United States during flu season. An annual flu vaccine is the best way to reduce the chances of getting the flu and spreading it to others. When more people get vaccinated, less flu spreads throughout the community.

For the 2017-2018 flu season, the CDC estimates:

- Flu illnesses reached 49 million, more than the combined populations of Texas and Florida.
- Flu hospitalizations totaled 960,000, more than the amount of staffed hospital beds in the U.S.
- The number of flu deaths was approximately 79,000, more than the average number of people who attend the Super Bowl each year.

One person with the flu can infect other people one day before any symptoms develop, and up to about seven days after a person becomes sick. The virus can spread to others up to six feet away, mainly by microscopic droplets expelled into the air when people cough, sneeze or even talk.

The CDC also reports all Americans receiving a flu vaccine could dramatically reduce healthcare costs, along with the number of people infected with the flu. Research found annual direct flu costs, such as hospital stays, medications and doctor’s visits for adults, are an estimated \$10.4 billion. The flu causes U.S. employees to miss approximately 17 million workdays at an estimated \$7 billion a year in sick days and lost productivity.

To prevent the flu:

- Get vaccinated
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash hands
- Stay home when you’re sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

**Alabamians can get a flu shot by visiting their physician or local pharmacy.** For more information, go to [cdc.gov/flu/index.htm](http://cdc.gov/flu/index.htm).

***About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama***

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama has insured Alabamians for over 83 years. Blue Cross offers coverage plans to corporations, individuals and the senior market. For more information about Blue Cross, visit [AlabamaBlue.com](http://AlabamaBlue.com). Connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) for more up-to-date information.

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