



# Type 2 Diabetes & the Flu—What’s the Connection?

Late September is the start of flu (*influenza*) season in the United States. Flu is a serious respiratory illness that can lead to other illnesses, hospitalization, and death. People with type 2 diabetes are at high risk for getting the flu—especially if their diabetes is not well controlled.

## *Type 2 diabetes makes it easier to get the flu*

Your immune system protects you against viruses and diseases. Type 2 diabetes and other long-lasting (*chronic*) diseases can make your immune system weak, which makes it harder for your body to fight infections. This means that getting viruses like the flu is easier than it would be for people who don’t have diabetes.



## *The flu makes type 2 diabetes harder to manage*

Controlling your type 2 diabetes is more difficult when you’re sick, and this is especially true if you have the flu. The flu can cause your blood sugar to increase. And if you’re feeling sick, you may not want to eat, which causes your blood sugar to drop. These blood sugar “highs and lows” can lead to complications, which may require you to go to the hospital.

## *The flu is preventable! Here’s what you can do.*

The flu is a common illness that can be prevented with a yearly flu shot (*vaccine*). The American Diabetes Association recommends that all people with type 2 diabetes (and those who have type 1 diabetes) who are over the age of 6 months should get a flu shot each year.

Your family members (over the age of 6 months) should also get the flu vaccine to prevent spread of the illness to you and other people in your home.



***If you have type 2 diabetes and get the flu... Call your healthcare provider immediately!***

**The ADA recommends that all people with type 2 diabetes get a flu shot each year**

### **Allergic to eggs?**

Some flu vaccines are made using eggs. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have had a reaction to eggs in the past.



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
TALK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER**

**REFERENCES:** American Diabetes Association. Standards of medical care in diabetes—2014. *Diabetes Care*. 2014;37(suppl 1):S14-S80. • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Flu and people with diabetes. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/diabetes/>.

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