

- Influenza / Vaccination

As rainy season enters, get your flu shots

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FLU SEASON is upon the Philippines, as the rains come in from June to November. Doctors recommend that people update their flu shots to avoid getting the virus.

“After going through waves of a grueling pandemic taking millions of people by surprise, the last thing we need is to head on to a flu season unarmed. As early as now, we must be ready and prepare for any and all eventuality,” said Dr. Donald Ray Josue, vaccines medical director at GSK Philippines, in a press statement.

An annual flu vaccine provides protection against the influenza virus, the World Health Organization (WHO) said. This is true even when the circulating virus does not match the vaccine virus. WHO recommends individuals to get a flu shot once a year to ensure protection from flu virus strains.

Individuals can get a flu vaccine at the same time they get a coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine.

The flu — or seasonal influenza — is an acute respiratory infection circulated worldwide by the influenza virus types (A and B) that cause it.

The flu is different from the common cough and cold in that the former is accompanied by high fever and muscle pains that last for days. The flu is also different from COVID-19, which is caused by a different virus and the symptoms of which include fatigue, loss of smell, and loss of taste, among others.

While anyone can get seasonal influenza, there are groups that are more at risk than others: pregnant women; children under 59 months; the elderly; and individuals with chronic medical or immunosuppressive conditions.

COVID-19 minimum health protocols of handwashing, face mask wearing, and physical distancing are also effective against influenza viruses, as these spread by contaminated hands, and cough and sneeze droplets spread into the air by infected persons.

So is keeping one’s immune system in shape with a healthy diet. According to the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, physical activity and healthy food choices allows one’s immune system to perform at peak physical condition.

The institute’s Pinggang Pinoy provides a visual guide that demonstrates the right food group proportions on a per-meal basis for healthy adults: half of the plate should have fruits and vegetables; the other half with energy-giving types of food such as rice and fish.
