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Contra Costa County to Begin Offering Free Flu Shots at COVID Testing Sites

Starting October 1, the County will begin offering free flu shots to people who come in for COVID testing at several testing sites in Contra Costa.

Making flu shots available at COVID testing sites is part of the County's larger effort to get more people vaccinated before flu season arrives. Contra Costa Health Services will also be hosting a series of [free one-day flu vaccination clinics](#) in October.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for people to get their flu shots this year," said Dr. Chris Farnitano, Contra Costa County's health officer. "Offering flu vaccine at COVID testing sites will let people cross two things off their to-do list at once."

With COVID-19 and the upcoming flu season overlapping, county health officials say it's more important than ever to get vaccinated against influenza this year.

Health officials are worried about a so-called "twindemic" or "double surge" in the coming months where hospitals are overwhelmed by having to care for both flu patients and COVID-19 patients.

Flu vaccination is the best protection against influenza. Another reason to get vaccinated: people can get sick with COVID and the flu at the same time, which may increase the risk they will need hospitalization.

Flu season in the Bay Area tends to peak in January or February, but it can be unpredictable – which is why it's best to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

"Getting a flu shot is one thing we all can do to ease our minds during COVID," said Dr. Farnitano. "Getting vaccinated this year means having one less thing to worry about."

Influenza and COVID are respiratory illnesses with similar symptoms, such as congestion, cough and fever. People who have these symptoms when flu season arrives should be tested for COVID to help ensure a correct medical diagnosis. The County offers [free COVID testing](#) to residents.

There is currently no vaccine for COVID. The best way to prevent the spread of COVID is to practice physical distancing, wear face coverings when around people who don't live with you, wash your hands regularly and stay home if you're sick. These measures also help reduce the spread of the flu as well.

County health officials also recommend that essential workers and others with frequent close contact with people outside their own household get tested once a month for COVID, even if they don't have symptoms.

A list of testing site offering free flu shots can be found on our [Get Tested page](#). There are currently five testing locations offering flu vaccine: Antioch, two in Concord, Richmond and San Ramon. We expect to make flu shots available at more testing sites in the near future.

For more information about influenza, visit cchealth.org/flu.

