

Protect Yourself and Your Community: Get Your Flu and COVID-19 Vaccines This Season

Influenza and COVID-19 can be serious for anyone, but some people face higher risks of complications such as pneumonia, hospitalization, and prolonged illness. People living with HIV, particularly those with a lower CD4 count or who are not receiving treatment, may fall into that group. Other conditions that often accompany HIV, such as heart, lung, or kidney disease, can add to the risk. Vaccination is one of the most effective tools we have to reduce the chance of severe illness. It also helps protect the people around us, including infants, older adults, and anyone with a weakened immune system!

Let's dispel some myths

"The flu shot gave me the flu." This is the most common myth, and it is not true. Flu shots are made with inactivated (killed) virus or with a single protein from the virus, so they cannot cause influenza. Some people do feel a sore arm, mild fatigue, or a low fever for a day or two. These are signs that the immune system is responding, not signs of infection.

"The COVID-19 vaccine can change my DNA or give me COVID." It cannot do either. The vaccine teaches your body to recognize the virus. It does not contain the live virus and does not alter your genes.

"Vaccines won't work with HIV." Vaccines can still provide meaningful protection. Response may be somewhat weaker when CD4 counts are low, which is one more reason to stay on HIV treatment and to get vaccinated.

"I'm healthy, so I don't need it." Even healthy people can become seriously ill, and anyone can pass these viruses to someone more vulnerable.

Talk with your medical provider

Recommendations can vary based on your age, health, and treatment, and official guidance for this season has been evolving. A conversation with your medical provider is the best way to get advice that fits you. Ask:

- Which flu vaccine is right for me? (People with weakened immune systems are generally advised to avoid the nasal spray version.)
- Should I get the updated COVID-19 vaccine this season, and when?
- Could my CD4 count or other health conditions change my recommendation?
- Is it safe to receive both vaccines at the same visit?

If you are on PrEP or are at risk for HIV, your regular check-ins are a convenient time to bring this up too. Protection can fade over the season, so getting vaccinated now helps carry you through winter. If cost or access is a concern, our staff can help connect you with resources. Vaccination is a simple act of care for yourself and for your community!

AIDS Walk 2026

This year's AIDS Walk was a great success. We came out on a gorgeous day to celebrate the progress we have made and to acknowledge the work that remains. You may donate through early November. Click the image and be sure to share that your donation is for Care2Prevent!



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Staff Spotlight: Marc Brunache



Those of you who know the team will be familiar with our Medical Case Coordinator, Marc Brunache. Though Marc is relatively new to C2P, he has over a decade of work in Ryan White case management and care coordination. Marc's interest in HIV stems from his parents, who both worked in the medical field and showed him how negatively stigma

and lack of access to care impact the health outcomes of individuals.

Growing up in the 90s, Marc remembers the heavy toll HIV had on the communities around him, and after he graduated college, the opportunity presented itself to step into case management and he answered the call.

Marc enjoys living in Chicago, and can often be found walking along the lakefront, which he finds is unrivaled by the other places he's lived. When not at work, he likes to remain low-key. Along with those walks, he enjoys most sports and loves playing pick-up games at the park. Marc enjoys listening to music from all around the world. If you see him around the office or clinic, ask him what's on his playlist!

Reach out for more information

Give us a call at +1 (773) 702-5872
OR visit our website at care2prevent.com