

NEWS BRIEF

Provided by: Wallace Welch & Willingham

CDC Director Warns of "Worst Fall" for Public Health if COVID-19 Measures Aren't Followed

In an [interview](#) with WebMD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Robert Redfield warned of the potential impact of a surge in COVID-19 cases this fall. Redfield called on Americans to help bring the outbreak under control by participating in advised practices such as wearing a mask, washing hands, social distancing and avoiding crowds. Redfield also warned that "this could be the worst fall from a public health perspective, we've ever had" if COVID-19 preventive measures aren't followed.

This year, the CDC stresses the importance of the flu shot, since health care capacity may be limited as the flu season coincides with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Health Care Capacity and Flu Season

The coronavirus isn't the only public health concern as we approach the winter months. Colder temperatures drive people indoors, which health experts warn leads to cases of influenza spreading more easily than during warmer summer months. With both COVID-19 and the flu in the fall, Redfield stated that either one of those by themselves could stress certain hospital systems. According to Redfield, "By getting that flu vaccine, you may be able to then negate the necessity to have to take up a hospital bed."

According to the CDC, [flu season begins](#) in October and peaks between December and February, typically leading to 140,000 to 180,000 [hospitalizations per year](#).

According to CDC Director Robert Redfield, a surge in COVID-19 cases, along with the upcoming flu season, could create the worst fall that we've ever had if preventive measures aren't followed.

CDC Urges Public to Get Flu Shot

Redfield stated that public adaption of flu shots may help ease the impact of a surge of cases in the fall. The CDC typically purchases doses of the flu shot for uninsured adults, and typically orders around 500,000. According to Redfield, the CDC has ordered an extra 10 million doses this year. Though less than 50% of Americans got a flu shot last year, Redfield is hoping for 65% to comply this flu season. The CDC normally recommends 60% to 70% of the public get a flu shot.

Redfield noted that, if there is one thing we all can do to prepare for the fall—besides wearing a mask, social distancing, hand-washing and being smart about gatherings—it would be to get the flu vaccine.



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