

American Preparedness for the Annual Flu Season Relies on a Coordinated National Strategy

An overview of how flu vaccines are developed and why timing is critical to American preparedness and public health

Rapidly Evolving Influenza Strains Require Annual Updates

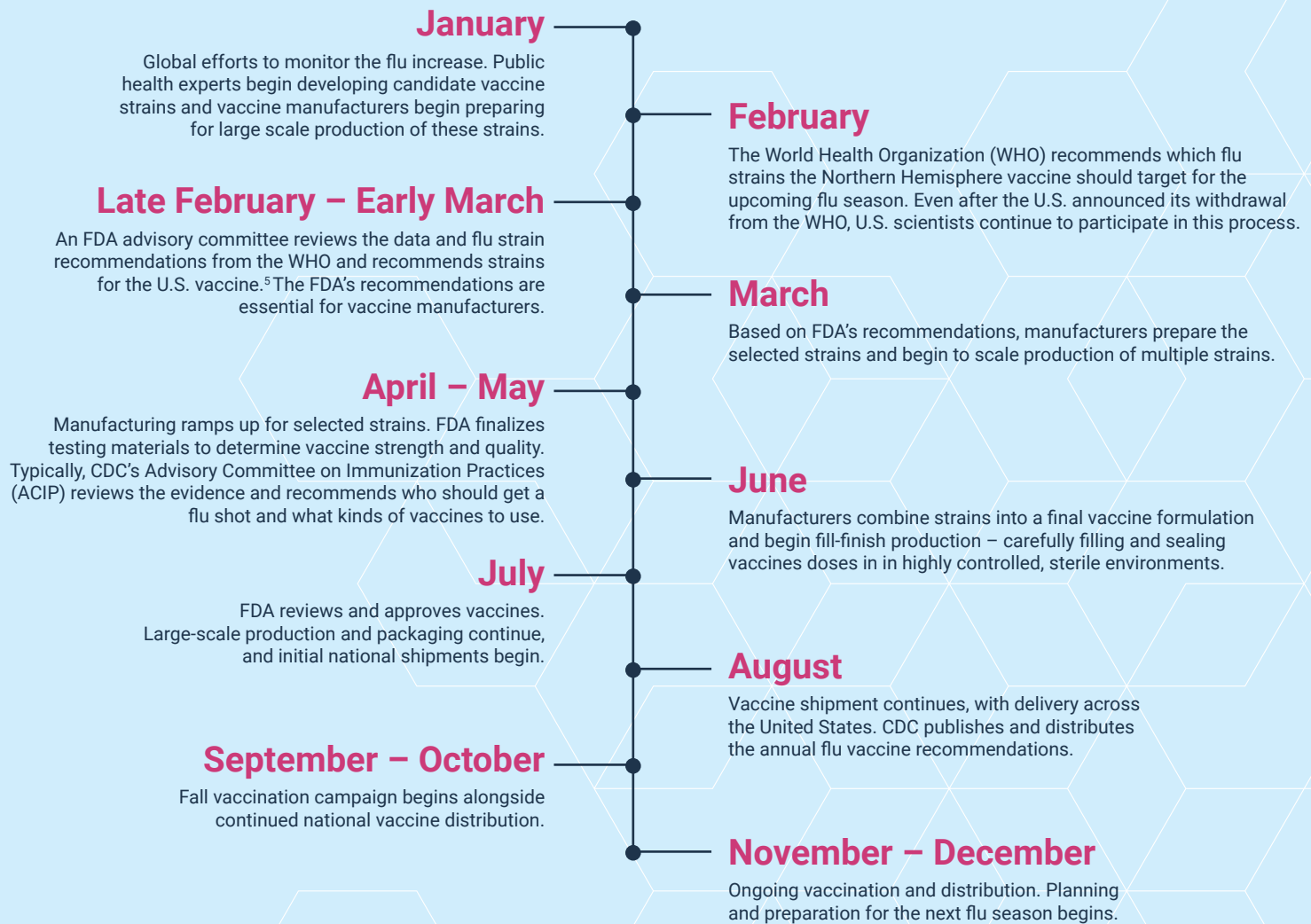
Seasonal flu vaccines are updated annually to protect against constantly evolving strains of the virus.¹ To be prepared each year, it is critical to keep the flu vaccine development timeline on track. Each year, public health experts, researchers, regulators, and manufacturers work on a tight schedule, going from strain selection to nationwide distribution within just a few months.² Protecting Americans from this dangerous and deadly disease requires coordinated collaboration, evidence-based science, and strong surveillance data.

Timely Vaccination Development Saves Lives:

Seasonal flu leads to millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and over \$11 billion in costs each year.³ Flu vaccines are safely administered to millions of Americans every year, and are the best way to protect against flu-related illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths.⁴ Protection against the flu depends on vaccines being developed and delivered on schedule. Keeping this timeline on track is essential to keeping families across the country healthy and safe.



Flu Vaccine Development is a Multi-Staged, Evidence-Based and Time-Sensitive Process



The Bottom Line

The U.S. flu vaccine system produces and delivers hundreds of millions of doses each year.

The system works well – but only if the annual, time-sensitive development timeline stays on track. Success depends on early strain selection, sustained coordination across national and global partners, rigorous regulatory review and efficient manufacturing.

Staying on schedule ensures vaccines are available and that Americans are protected from severe illness, hospitalization and even death.

¹<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/its-good-time-get-your-flu-vaccine>

²<https://www.vifo.org/news/2025/how-are-flu-vaccine-strains-chosen-each-year.php>

³<https://www.nfid.org/infectious-disease/flu/>

⁴<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines/keyfacts.html>

⁵<https://www.fda.gov/advisory-committees/advisory-committee-calendar/vaccines-and-related-biological-products-advisory-committee-march-12-2026-meeting-announcement#event-information>