



# The Black Track

## *Office of African American Affairs*

# TIS THE (FLU) SEASON: FLU SHOTS

### Decide what's best for you and your family

Tis the season to be jolly, and tis the season to get the flu. It is the time of the year when we're accustomed to hearing our doctors, family members, jobs, and local advertisement remind us to get our flu shots. Most people are considering what options are best for their health during this time of the year. So, it was a surprise to see the percentage of African Americans who get the flu shot and discovering that our older population do not have access to the best option.

The virus is typically called the flu but is officially called influenza. Influenza is an acute, highly contagious respiratory disease caused by three orthomyxoviruses: A, B or C Influenza. ("Influenza," n.d.) Considering the trauma that we as a nation just went through with the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), reviewing what options are best for you and your family's health is necessary. Even choosing to get your flu shot in a pharmacy verses a doctor's office could impact the options available to the public.

At the end of September 2022, 10.9% of pregnant African American women have gotten the flu vaccination. As of May 28, 2022, 40.0% of African Americans overall have received the Flu vaccination. (The NIVD Is Preliminary Influenza Vaccination Data Updated Weekly., 2022b) Oddly, the number of flu vaccinations across the nation are down. Two years ago, 156 million flu vaccines were administered around this season, and currently, about 128 million flu vaccines have been administered.



**"Since you have an increased risk of diabetes and heart disease in African American community, it inherently disadvantages this population to give them the standard-dose vaccine"**

Dr. Keith Ferdinand  
(A cardiologist and professor of medicine at Tulane University)

### Article Reference



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One of the best things about this country is that most people or groups can decide to take or not to take a flu vaccine shot. Consult your doctor and determine what's best for you. Unfortunately, African Americans and minorities aren't given the same choice in this country. For example, 75% of the population receives an enhanced dose of the flu vaccine, and the remaining people, comprised of African Americans and other minorities, get the regular dose. (Allen, 2022)

There is no campaign for the different flu vaccines in fear that the demand would be too high, and there would be a shortage. (Allen, 2022) However, there doesn't seem to be a concern with a shortage when the enhanced dose is presented to 75% of the population. (Allen, 2022) Can we guess what population that is? The elderly African American population is 30% less likely to get the higher dose. Typically, it's not even offered to them. Considering that African Americans are almost twice as likely to get hospitalized from the flu, we suggest that our elderly get the best version of the flu shot to keep them safe. (McPhillips, 2022)

In conclusion, let us share this knowledge with our friends and family, especially for the older population. Requesting the enhanced flu vaccine could make the difference between hospitalization and death. We already went through so much with COVID-19. So, stay safe out there, shot or not.



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