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FDA Approves the First Flu Vaccine for At Home Use, Providing a Needle Free Option Outside of Traditional Health Care Settings

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On September 20, 2024, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first influenza (flu) vaccine for at-home use.

The vaccine, FluMist, is administered by nasal spray and prevents the flu by using a weakened form of live influenza virus strains A and B to create a lasting immune response. FluMist was initially approved by FDA in 2003 for individuals ages 5 to 49, and in 2007, FDA extended the approval of its use to children ages 2 to 5. Until recently, the vaccine could only be administered by medical providers at a doctor's office or pharmacy. FDA expects that this new option for receiving a flu vaccine with potentially greater convenience and flexibility will increase access.

Under the new approval, FluMist may be self-administered by adults up to 49 years of age or administered by a caregiver for those between ages 2 through 17. A prescription is still required, however, for at-home use. Beginning next fall, individuals 18 years and older will be able to order FluMist through a third-party online pharmacy by visiting FluMist's website and completing an eligibility assessment. If they are eligible, a pharmacist will approve their order, and the vaccine will be shipped to them.

The vaccine is expected to be available for at-home use for the 2025-26 flu season.

Categories

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