



FLU VACCINE FACTS

What Is Influenza (Flu)?

Influenza is a highly contagious viral infection of the upper respiratory tract that can lead to pneumonia. It usually occurs in the cold winter months, causing fever, chills, cough, and soreness and aching in the back, arms, and legs. While most people recover completely within a week, complications may be serious or even fatal. Complications of the flu are generally caused by bacterial infections that occur when the body is weakened. In recent years, influenza and pneumonia ranked sixth among causes of death in the United States, with the majority of these deaths occurring among people 65 years of age or older (CDC, 07/95).

Who Should Get A Seasonal Flu Shot?

On February 24, 2010 vaccine experts voted that everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine each year starting with the 2010-2011 influenza season. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted for "universal" flu vaccination in the U.S. to expand protection against the flu to more people. While everyone should get a flu vaccine each flu season, it's especially important that certain people get vaccinated either because they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing flu-related complications:

1. Pregnant women
2. Children younger than the age of 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
3. People 50 years of age and older
4. People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
5. People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
6. People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
 - a. Health care workers
 - b. Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
 - c. Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

Who should not get the flu shot?

Talk with the doctor before getting a flu shot if you:

1. Have ever had a severe allergic reaction to eggs or to a previous flu shot **or**
2. People with a history of Guillain-Barre' Syndrome that occurred after receiving the influenza vaccine

If you are sick with a fever when you go to get your flu shot, you should talk to your doctor or nurse about getting your immunization at a later date. However, you can get a flu shot at the same time you have a respiratory illness without fever or if you have another mild illness.

If I received the flu vaccine last year, do I need it again?

Yes. The flu is caused by distinct families of viruses. Within each major family there are many different strains. When you have the flu or receive the vaccine, your body responds by developing antibodies. The following year, a new strain may appear. Your antibodies are less effective or ineffective against this unfamiliar strain, and if exposed, you may develop the flu.

Can the flu shot give me the flu?

No, a flu shot cannot cause the flu illness. The viruses contained in flu shots are inactivated (killed), which means they cannot cause infection.

When does the flu vaccine start working to protect me?

The development of antibodies in adults usually takes two (2) weeks.

What are the side effects that could occur?

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever (low grade)
- Aches

If these problems occur, they begin soon after the shot and usually last one to two days.

Occasionally a vaccine, like any medicine, may cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions.

If you suspect you may be having a serious reaction please call your physician immediately or go to the nearest ER facility.

If fever or other symptoms worsen or last more than two days, notify your doctor. These problems are probably not related to the flu vaccine.

Date: _____

I have read and understood the information contained in this report regarding influenza vaccine.

Signature