



the children's clinic, plc
special care for special people

Flu and Flu Vaccine FAQs

The AAP and CDC recommend NOT using FluMist (live nasal flu vaccine) for the 2017/2018 Flu season due to decreased efficacy in multiple years (same recommendation from 2016/2017 season).

What is the Flu?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. The flu can cause mild to severe illness and even death.

How is the Flu spread?

Influenza is mainly spread by small droplets produced by the talking, sneezing or coughing of an infected individual. It is also spread by direct contact like shaking hands or touching a surface with droplets on it.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Fever (not always), chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, muscle/body aches, headache, fatigue, vomiting/diarrhea (more so in children)

When are you contagious?

An infected person is likely to pass the flu from 1 day before symptoms present to 7 days later (longer in children). Symptoms start 1-4 days after infection with the virus.

When is flu season?

Seasonal flu viruses circulate year-round, but there is an increase in cases in October/November with a peak from December to February. The season can last as late as May at times.

How bad is the flu?

2015/2016 data shows the following:

- overall burden of the flu was 25 million flu illnesses
- 11 million influenza-associated medical visits
- 310,000 influenza-related hospitalizations
- 12,000 Pneumonia + Influenza deaths (likely more influenza-related deaths but this is the best statistic we have to calculate them)

Each year millions of children get influenza, and thousands are hospitalized. In recent years there have been around 100 pediatric deaths annually from the flu and these deaths usually occur in unvaccinated children older than 6 months.

What complications can occur from the flu and who is at risk?

Most who get the flu recover in anywhere from several days to 2 weeks, but sometimes complications can occur. These complications are pneumonia, bronchitis, sinusitis, ear infection, and worsening chronic health problems. Those most at risk of these complications are young children (especially less than 5), adults over 65, residents of nursing homes or long-term care facilities, pregnant women, or anyone with a chronic medical condition.



GET YOUR FLU VACCINE APPOINTMENT NOW!

THE CHILDREN'S CLINIC
at 601-420-8233

TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT.



What can I do?

The best preventive measure is to get the flu vaccine. Everyday preventive measures like avoiding people known to be sick, frequent hand washing, and staying out of school or work until no longer contagious are effective.

What is the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine consists of inactivated particles from specific flu viruses that lead to production of antibodies to these viruses in the body. This inactivated virus exposure allows the immune system to be prepared when it is exposed to the actual live virus. There are many different flu viruses that are constantly changing, so the composition of the U.S. flu vaccine is reviewed annually and updated as needed to match the circulating flu viruses. There are both Trivalent (3 viruses) and Quadrivalent (4 viruses) options to protect against the A and B strains most likely to be circulating in any given season. For the 2017/2018 season the only recommended options are injectable (no nasal options). Getting the flu vaccine is the best way to cut down on flu illnesses, flu-related doctor visits, missed school and work days due to the flu and flu-related hospital stays and deaths.

Can I get the flu from the flu vaccine?

No. The flu vaccine is made up of inactivated pieces of the flu viruses which can cause an antibody response in the body but cannot cause the flu. Some people experience flu-like symptoms like headache or body aches but these usually last for at most 48 hours. Remember, it takes 1-4 days from being infected with the flu virus until symptoms occur so if you happen to get the flu vaccine in this period of time, you will get the flu anyway (but not because of the vaccine).

Do I really need to get the flu vaccine every year?

Yes, for two reasons. The immune response from the vaccine declines over time so the effects of the vaccine will not last from year to year. Also, due to continued changes in the viral strains, the updated vaccine is necessary for the best protection.

When should I get the flu vaccine?

It takes 2 weeks for the body to produce antibodies to the flu virus after getting the vaccination. It is recommended that the flu vaccine be given at least by the end of October but getting it any point in the season (earlier or later) is worthwhile.

Who should get the flu vaccine?

Everyone greater than 6 months of age should get the flu vaccine yearly (but especially those in the high-risk groups mentioned above)

Are there any special recommendations for younger kids getting the vaccine?

Children between 6 months and 8 years old who have either never been vaccinated or have received less than 2 vaccines prior to July of 2017 should receive 2 doses spaced at least 4 weeks apart. The first dose "primes" the immune system and the second dose provides immune protection (within 2 weeks of the vaccine). It is very important that these children get both doses.

What if I have an egg allergy?

In previous seasons flu vaccine was restricted in those with egg allergy; this is no longer the case and flu vaccine is recommended for these individuals as well. It is also no longer recommended that anyone with an egg allergy be observed for 30 minutes after receiving the vaccine. Anyone with an allergic reaction to eggs other than hives should receive the flu vaccine in an inpatient or outpatient setting under the supervision of a healthcare professional who can recognize and manage a severe allergic reaction, but based on current studies, it is unlikely that there will be a reaction.



**IF YOUR CHILD HAS NOT ALREADY RECEIVED
THEIR FLU VACCINE THIS SEASON, PLEASE CALL**

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