

Everyone 6 Months of Age and Older Should get the Seasonal Influenza Vaccine

Flu is a serious contagious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. This year's seasonal flu vaccine protects you against four types of seasonal influenza.

CDC urges you to take the following actions to protect yourself and others from influenza (the flu):

1) Take time to get a flu vaccine.

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
- While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the four viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- **Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu..... Just Do It Get Vaccinated Now!**
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. Parents and other caregivers should be vaccinated instead.
- Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

2) Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

3) Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.

- If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can treat your illness.
- Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines and must be prescribed by your Dr.
- Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.
- It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early in your illness.

The pneumonia vaccine is also recommended for person's age 65 years or older as well as certain high risk populations. High risk populations include adults who smoke cigarettes and persons with chronic health conditions. CDC now recommends that adults 65 years or older also receive the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13, Prevnar-13), which provides added protection against pneumonia caused by pneumococcal bacteria. Getting both vaccines offers the best protection we have available against pneumococcal disease. Ask your provider if you should have these vaccines. The pneumococcal vaccine are safe, they work, and last most people a lifetime.

These vaccines are available at the Health Department (see flu clinic link on home page) or your local Physician's office.