

FREQUENTLY ASKED FLU QUESTIONS

Q: WILL I GET THE FLU FROM THE FLU SHOT?

A: No. Flu vaccine is created from dead or inactive viruses that are not contagious.

Q: WHEN SHOULD I GET A FLU SHOT?

A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccinating as early as vaccine is available. Influenza usually occurs from November until April, with activity peaking between late December and early March.

Q: WHY GET A FLU SHOT?

A: Influenza usually leaves its victims unable to function for several days and was responsible for an estimated 381,000 hospitalizations during the 2012-2013 flu season.* Getting an annual flu shot is your best protection.

Q: HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE FLU SHOT?

A: Those who receive the flu vaccine are 60% less likely to need treatment for the flu by a healthcare provider. Getting the flu vaccine has been shown to offer substantial other benefits as well including reducing illness, antibiotic use, time lost from work, hospitalizations, and deaths.**

Q: WILL THE FLU SHOT PROTECT ME FROM H1N1 ("SWINE FLU")?

A: Yes. The vaccine for this flu season includes immunization against the H1N1 virus that caused a pandemic in 2009, and has continued to circulate in the United States.

Q: DO I NEED A FLU SHOT EVERY YEAR?

A: Yes. The CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine as the first and best way to protect against influenza, even during years when the vaccine composition (the viruses the vaccine protects against) remains unchanged from the previous season. Yearly vaccination is recommended because immunity to influenza viruses declines over time and may be too low to provide protection year after year. This fall, everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as the influenza vaccines become available, even if they got vaccinated last season.

Q: WHO SHOULD GET A FLU SHOT?

A: The CDC recommends that all people age 6 months and older receive a flu shot every year.

Q: WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF GETTING A FLU SHOT?

A: For most people, vaccination causes no side effects. Less than 1/3 of those who receive a flu shot will experience some redness and/or soreness at the vaccination site, and only 5 percent to 10 percent will suffer mild side effects such as low-grade fevers and headaches. If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1 - 2 days.



For information regarding flu vaccine containing Thimerosal, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/thimerosal.htm>

* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, December 2013

** <http://www.flu.gov/prevention-vaccination/vaccination/>