

## FLU PREVENTION—DON'T WAIT...VACCINATE!!

### What is the flu?

Influenza, also known as the flu, is a viral infection that affects the respiratory tract causing a variety of symptoms. These symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, head and body aches, fatigue, and runny or stuffy nose. The flu can be very serious and cause severe health problems, including death. Per the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 200,000 people in the United States are hospitalized from flu complications every year. Additionally, people 65 years and older account for 90% of deaths caused by the flu.



### When does flu season occur in the U.S.?

Flu season in the United States takes place during the fall and winter months. The peak of the season can vary from year to year, happening anytime between November and March.

### How does the flu vaccine work?

The flu vaccination works by creating antibodies that protect against the influenza viruses. There are two forms available for the flu vaccine, the injection (shot) and the nasal spray.

### What are the side effects of the vaccination?

It is important to remember that any vaccination or medication can have potential side effects. Because there are two dosage forms of the influenza vaccine, the side effects can be type-specific. The flu shot may cause:

- fever
- body aches
- soreness and/or redness of the injection site

Some side effects caused by the nasal spray are:

- runny nose
- headaches
- sore throat & cough

### Should I get vaccinated?

Influenza is a very serious disease that can often lead to harmful health complications. The flu can infect anyone and is easily spread through human contact. The CDC recommends that all healthy individuals over the age of six months get vaccinated. The more individuals who are vaccinated, the less chance the virus has to spread. Also, it is very important that people who are at high risk to become infected receive the vaccine, including children and the elderly. However, not everyone is eligible to be vaccinated. Make sure to speak with your physician to determine the right course of action for you.

### When should I get vaccinated?

Flu vaccinations are usually supplied throughout the entire flu season. However, it is ideal to become vaccinated earlier to decrease your risk of becoming infected.

### Where can I receive the vaccination?

The flu vaccine is offered in several places, including pharmacies, physician offices, and many other health care provider locations. Furthermore, many employers or school health centers offer the flu vaccine.

### What else can I do to help prevent the flu?



In addition to getting vaccinated, there are several other ways to help prevent the spread of the virus.

***Stay clean:*** Washing your hands on a regular basis and keeping all surfaces at home or work clean and disinfected can help reduce the risk of exposure to the virus. Also, try not to touch your

eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.

***Avoid contact:*** If you do become sick, stay home and prevent spreading the disease to others. If someone else is sick, avoid close contact, if possible.

***Practice healthy habits:*** Make sure to cover your nose and mouth if you cough or sneeze. Additionally, staying physically active, eating healthy, and getting plenty of sleep can help deter infection from the virus.