

Flu shot

Please read the handout before getting your flu shot. If you would like, ask your nurse, pharmacist or doctor to review or read the information with you. If you have any questions or concerns about the flu shot, please ask.

What is the flu shot?

The flu shot is a vaccine that helps protect against getting the flu (influenza). The shot is given in the muscle in the upper arm.

Why should I get a flu shot?

The flu is an infection caused by a virus. People with the flu quickly become ill with a cough, fever, chills, sore throat, headache, muscle aches and tiredness. Most people are sick for 5 to 7 days, although the cough may last for weeks. In some people, the flu can lead to pneumonia, hospitalization and death.

The flu spreads easily from infected persons to others through coughing and sneezing. It can also be picked up through direct contact with surfaces and objects, like unwashed hands and toys.

The vaccine works by causing your body to produce its own protection against the flu. The flu shot can prevent the flu in most people. It may lessen how ill you feel if you do get the flu. You can protect yourself and your family by getting the flu shot.

How safe is the flu shot?

- The flu shot is considered safe. Serious side effects and allergic reactions can happen but are very rare.
- You cannot get the flu from the vaccine. Minor side effects from the vaccine include: pain and swelling where the shot is given, tiredness, muscle and joint pain, fever and headaches. Most side effects are mild, do not last long and usually go away on their own.
- If you have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication (blood thinners) that could affect blood clotting, please discuss your medical situation with your health care provider.

Who should get the flu shot?

- Any person over the age of 6 months.

The flu shot is especially important for a person who is:

- obese
- pregnant
- at risk of getting severely ill from the flu such as a person with a weakened immune system or a chronic illness (such as: heart disease, asthma or diabetes).
- in close contact with a person who is at risk of getting severely ill from the flu.

Who should not get the flu shot?

- A baby who is less than 6 months of age.

If you have any of these conditions, please see your doctor before getting a flu shot:

- a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome that developed within 6 weeks of getting a flu shot.
- have had severe Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome (ORS) after a past flu shot and needed to be in the hospital.
- a serious illness with an infection that started recently, you should wait until you recover before getting a flu shot.
- have had an allergic reaction to any flu shot or vaccine.



Please tell your nurse, pharmacist or doctor if you have ever had an allergic reaction to any flu shot or vaccine in the past.

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.
Clean your hands.**

