

eHouseCall

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A Monthly Electronic Newsletter from HealthLink

Doctor's Bag



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Flu Vaccine: Your Best Defense Against Influenza

Regardless of age or level of risk, the best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year, and now's the time to do it.

The CDC strongly recommends flu vaccination for the following priority groups:

People at high risk for flu complications, including:

- ◆ Children six months to five years of age
- ◆ Pregnant women
- ◆ People 50 years of age and older
- ◆ People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (e.g., congestive heart failure, asthma and diabetes)
- ◆ People who live in nursing homes and other long term care facilities

People who live with or care for those at high risk for flu complications, including:

- ◆ Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications
- ◆ Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children younger than age six
- ◆ Health care workers

Please check with your family doctor if you have questions or concerns about flu vaccination.

HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

NOVEMBER

Flu Prevention Tips for Home, Work and School From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The main way illnesses like flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called "droplet spread." Droplet spread occurs when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to two hours or more on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs and desks.



The best way to prevent flu is to get vaccinated each year. Here are three more ways you and your family can help stop the spread of germs:

1. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Use a tissue if you have one and then throw it away. Clean your hands and do so every time you cough or sneeze.
2. Clean your hands often – 15 to 20 seconds with soap and warm water. When soap and water aren't available, you may use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
3. Remind your children to practice healthy habits. Flu has caused high rates of absenteeism among students and staff but it isn't the only infection of concern – nearly 22 million school days are lost each year to the common cold alone. When children practice healthy habits, they miss fewer days of school.

DidUKnow?

- ◆ 35 to 50 million Americans come down with the flu during each flu season.
- ◆ Children are 2-3 times more likely than adults to get sick with the flu, and children more frequently spread the virus to others.
- ◆ Although most people recover from flu, CDC estimates that in the United States more than 100,000 people are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die from the flu and flu-related complications every year.
- ◆ Symptoms of flu include:
 - Fever (usually high)
 - Headache
 - Extreme tiredness
 - Dry cough
 - Sore throat
 - Nasal congestion
 - Body aches
 - Stomach symptoms like nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may occur but are more common in children
- ◆ Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration and worsening of chronic medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma and diabetes.

Information Source
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC - Influenza (Flu) / What Everyone Should Know About Flu and the Flu Vaccine (www.cdc.gov/flu); National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (www.cdc.gov/vaccines/about/)

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