

TAKE HOME FACT: INFLUENZA VACCINE

What is Influenza?

Influenza (flu) is a serious lung disease caused by a virus, which spreads from person to person. Influenza can cause:

- Fever
- Cough
- Muscle aches
- Chills
- Headache
- Sore throat

It can also lead to pneumonia and death. Influenza can make people of any age ill. Although most people are ill for only a few days, some have a more serious illness and need to be hospitalized. Thousands die each year from influenza-related illnesses. Most deaths from influenza are in people over the age of 50.

Who Should Get the Vaccine?

- Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday
- People aged 50 years of age and older
- Adults and children with chronic medical conditions
- Anyone taking long-term steroids, receiving cancer treatment or with HIV infection
- Children and teenagers on long-term aspirin therapy.
- Household members (including children) and caregivers of all at-risk persons
- Health care workers
- Residents and employees of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- Students and others in institutional settings
- Pregnant women
- Anyone who wants to decrease the chance of getting the flu
- Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

Will the Vaccine Keep Me from Getting the Flu?

- The vaccination will protect most people from most strains of influenza. Since the virus changes frequently, the vaccine is updated yearly.
- The vaccine will begin to provide its protective effect after one or two weeks and will last several months.
- Flu shots will not protect all persons who get them against influenza, but should at least decrease the severity of the illness.
- Flu shots will not protect you against other illnesses, which may resemble the flu.

Components of the 2008-2009 Vaccine

The influenza vaccine protects you against three strains of influenza expected to be most prevalent each year. The 2008-2009 Vaccine includes A/Brisbane, A/Uruguay, B/Florida.

Possible Side Effects

Most people have no side effects from the flu shot. The most common reaction is soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site for a day or two. Occasionally, persons may experience a fever or achiness for one or two days. As with any drug or vaccine, there is a slight possibility that an allergic reaction, or even death, could occur. **THE VACCINE CANNOT CAUSE INFLUENZA. RESPIRATORY ILLNESS AFTER VACCINATION IS COINCIDENTAL AND UNRELATED TO THE VACCINATION.**

DO NOT TAKE THIS SHOT IF:

- YOU HAVE A SEVERE ALLERGY TO EGGS, THIMERIOSAL (PRESERVATIVE) or LATEX
- YOU HAVE EVER HAD A SERIOUS REACTION TO A FLU SHOT.
- YOU HAVE A FEVER. (Delay the shot until the fever is gone.)

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING THE SHOT IF:

- YOU HAVE EVER HAD GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME
- YOU ARE PREGNANT IN THE FIRST TRIMESTER OR NURSING.

QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions about influenza or the influenza vaccination ask now or call your physician or local Department of Health before requesting this vaccine.

REACTIONS:

If you become ill and visit the doctor, hospital or clinic in the four weeks after today's shot, please report this to VNA Community Healthcare, Inc.



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