



# What you should know about the Influenza Vaccination (Flu Shot)

*A message from Dr. Ferra, MD, Director of Clinical Services RSBCIHI*

## **What are the symptoms of Influenza?**

- Fever, sometimes high
- Body aches
- Runny nose
- Headache
- Joint pain
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea more common in children



## **Why should I get a flu shot?**

Influenza is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization or death. Annual vaccines are the best way to protect you against the flu.

## **When should I get my flu shot?**

Flu season is typically September 1st through April 30th. It is best to get your flu shot the beginning of Fall. It takes about 2 weeks for the flu vaccine to be effective. Getting the flu shot later may still be beneficial.

## **Benefits of the Flu Shot**

- Can keep you from getting sick with the flu
- Reduced risk of hospitalization
- Preventative tool for people with chronic conditions
- Protects pregnant women
- Can be lifesaving for children
- Reduce severity of illness if you do get the flu
- Getting the vaccine may help protect vulnerable people around you with chronic conditions

## **How do vaccines work?**

Vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about 2 weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against the virus. The flu vaccine protects against influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. Vaccines protect against the four most common viruses, 2 type A and 2 type B.

## **Who should get vaccinated?**

**Everyone 6 months or older should get a yearly flu vaccine, especially those at high risk:**

- Adults 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- Young children
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- HIV
- Cancer
- Children with neurologic conditions
- Heart disease and stroke





# What you should know about the Influenza Vaccination (Flu Shot) cont'd

## ***Why do I need the flu shot every year?***

Immune protection declines over time. Flu viruses are constantly changing.

## ***Flu and COVID-19***

- There is no evidence that getting the flu shot will increase risk of getting COVID-19
- During a pandemic, it is even more important to do everything possible to reduce illness and preserve scarce healthcare resources
- Getting both the flu and COVID-19 is possible, and potentially deadly

## ***Can I get the flu even if I get the vaccine?***

- Yes, you can get the flu even if you get the vaccine
- Why? Because you have been exposed before you got the vaccine
- Vaccine takes about 2 weeks before it becomes effective
- You may be exposed to a virus which was not included in this season's predicted types
- You can still get the flu despite the vaccine's protection, it is not 100% effective
- Vaccine can help lessen symptoms if you get the flu

## ***Can the flu shot give me the flu?***

NO! The flu shot does not cause the flu. The vaccine is made of parts of the virus that stimulate your immune system to produce antibodies. There is no live virus in the vaccine.

## ***Side effects of the flu shot***

- Soreness and redness at vaccination site
- Low grade headache
- Muscle aches
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- (None of these symptoms mean you have the flu)

## ***Vaccines Contain toxins***

- Trace amounts found in manufacturing processes
- Amounts too low to cause any harm
- Higher amounts found naturally in foods and other products

## ***Vaccines myths debunked: Vaccines Cause Autism***

A 1997 article totally discredited this myth. There is no evidence that vaccines cause autism based on numerous respected authors and articles.

## ***Natural immunity is better***

- Natural immunity can produce a stronger immune response from getting the flu.
- You can get natural immunity when you get the flu. However, the benefits of the vaccine may outweigh the effects of the disease. The flu can be very serious or even deadly.

For more information please contact the Medical Department at your RSBCIHI clinic.