



Getting Vaccinated Against the Flu

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With the start of fall, we enter into Flu season. Undoubtedly, you have seen signs at the grocery store or at the pharmacy advertising Flu shots, and if you have been to the doctor's office lately, more likely than not, you have been offered a Flu shot. While a



good number of people do get vaccinated every year, a large number of people do not. A variety of reasons are frequently cited, like "I don't believe in shots," or "The last time I got a flu shot, I got the Flu," or "I never get the Flu." None of these reasons are medically accurate, and what's worse is that going unvaccinated puts you at risk for not only getting the flu, but also for creating a pandemic in our population where everyone gets the flu!

The Flu is not just a common cold. It is an infection caused by a specific virus known as the Influenza virus. It is very

contagious, and early on, it can be very difficult to tell the difference between the common cold and the Flu. When you do have the Flu, the symptoms tend to be more severe, and frequently include high fevers, chills, cough, and a stuffy nose. Many people will also have headaches, body aches, and fatigue. In many cases, the symptoms are so severe that an infected person cannot (and should not) go to school or work for several days. Usually, symptoms resolve within a few days, but the Flu is sometimes bad enough to result in the need for admission to the hospital, and on occasion, can lead to additional infections such as pneumonia.

In the past, Flu outbreaks have led to major pandemics, or spread of the infection to huge numbers of people. Most famously in 1918, a type of Flu known as The Spanish Flu led to as much as 40% of the world population becoming ill, with 50 million deaths worldwide, and 675,000 deaths in the U.S. More recently in 2010, the Swine Flu infected as many as 90 million people, and was the cause of death in nearly 18,000 people!

The good news is that the Flu shot works to prevent all these things from happening in you and your community. The vaccination is very effective in preventing you and your family from getting the Flu, which means less days of school and work missed, less visits to the doctor, less complications to your own health, and less

hospitalizations. Plus, YOU CANNOT GET THE FLU FROM THE VACCINE! It is impossible!

So what can you do to keep yourself and your community healthy?

- Wash your hands!
- Get your Flu shot
- Stay home from school or work when you are sick with the Flu
- Avoid coming in contact with people who have the Flu
- Call your doctor for advice of what to do if you think you have the flu. If you need to be seen, please wear a mask, and avoid touching surfaces

Getting your Flu shot is the best thing you can do to avoid the Flu. So for everyone 6 months old and older, get vaccinated, and add years to your life, and life to your years!