



Seasonal Flu

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What is flu and its symptoms?

Flu is a disease caused by the influenza virus. The most common symptoms are fever and cough PLUS one or more of the following:

- Sore throat
- Muscle pain
- Joint pain
- Weakness (includes extreme tiredness)

Young children and the elderly may not have fever. Children under five may have nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

How is flu spread?

It spreads very easily from an infected person to others by coughing and sneezing. It is also spread when you touch an object or surface that was contaminated with the virus such as unwashed hands, clothing, toys, or eating utensils.

Who should get the seasonal flu shot?

Everyone six months of age and older, including pregnant women, should get the seasonal flu shot. It can protect you and those around you from getting sick.

Who should not get the seasonal flu shot?

Children under six months old should not get the flu shot. Also, don't get the shot if you:

- Had a serious reaction to a previous flu shot
- Have a serious allergy to eggs
- Have a fever
- Had Guillain-Barré syndrome (serious nerve disease) within eight weeks of receiving a seasonal flu vaccine

Talk to your doctor if you have a history of oculo-respiratory syndrome (common cold symptoms and/or reddened eyes within 24 hours after a previous flu shot).

How many shots do I need?

Most people, including pregnant women, need one shot. Children six months to eight years old will need two shots at least four weeks apart if they are getting the flu shot for the first time.

How well does it protect me against flu?

No vaccine is 100% effective. The seasonal flu shot protects about 70% to 90% of people who receive it. How well a flu shot protects a person depends mainly on their age and if they have a chronic medical condition or an immune system problem. If you get a flu shot and still get the flu, your illness will be milder and won't last as long.

Is it safe?

Yes. The risk that the flu shot will cause serious harm is very small. Most people have no problem. But, like any medicine, the flu shot can cause side effects.

The most common reactions include:

- Minor soreness where the needle was given
- Mild muscle aches and fever for one to two days following the flu shot. Report any other side effects to your doctor.

For more information, visit www.wdghu.org