

SHOULD I GET A FLU SHOT?

Influenza is a respiratory infection that can cause serious complications. Symptoms of influenza include fever, chills, muscle aches, headache and cough. The flu typically runs its course in about a week, although you may feel uncomfortable for several weeks, and complications may occur which require hospitalization.

The vaccines are reformulated annually to keep up with rapidly adapting flu viruses, therefore, last year's vaccine may not protect you from this year's viruses. It is recommended to get vaccinated again every year during the flu season.



Pros of flu vaccine:

- Can decrease the risk of upper respiratory illness by 25%
- Can reduce work absenteeism due to illness by 36%
- Do not cause the flu because are made with an inactivated form of virus
- Can prevent major complications or death with immunosuppressed individuals

Cons of flu vaccine:

- May not be safe for individuals allergic to egg protein or chickens and previous reaction to influenza vaccination
- Can have minor side effects like soreness, aches and low-grade fever
- Are not 100% effective and you may still get the flu

As an alternative to the flu vaccine, work on preventing the flu by strengthening your immune system. It is proven that individuals who exercise, take vitamin C, manage stress and have a healthy diet, have a decreased susceptibility to colds and the flu.

With or without a flu vaccine, you can help protect yourself from the flu and other viruses by practicing good hygiene such as:

- Washing your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoiding crowds when the flu season is prevalent

