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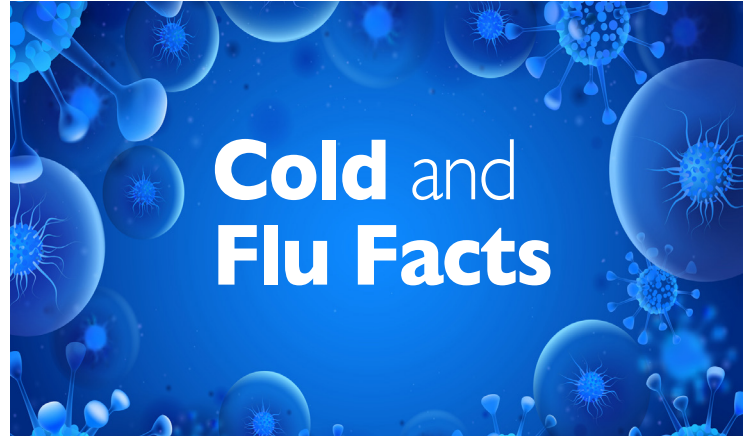
Vaccinations and Avoiding Infection

Stay as healthy as possible during cold and flu season:

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you get sick, stay home to avoid infecting others. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you



cough and sneeze (throw the tissue away); or with your arm (not your hand). If you touch something that might be contaminated with germs do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth — and wash hands often — to reduce risk of infection. And practice safe and healthy habits. Get a good night's sleep, eat nutritious foods, exercise often, manage stress and drink plenty of fluids.



There are a lot of myths about colds and the flu. Here's what you need to know:

- **The flu shot can't give you the flu.** Any soreness or fever is the body's normal reaction to getting a needle stick and building immunity, and should be temporary.
- **Cold weather doesn't cause colds.** There are more colds during winter months because that is when it's easier for viruses to spread.
- **Immunity to colds and flu does not necessarily improve with age,** because viruses are always mutating (changing). After childhood, adults may gain some immunity, but most people remain susceptible to colds and flu their entire lives. That's why you need a flu shot every year.



There's a right way to clean your hands and prevent the spread of illness: Wet your hands with clean warm or cold water and apply soap; lather by rubbing hands together, scrubbing the backs of hands, between fingers and under nails, for at least 20 seconds (sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice); rinse your

hands with water and dry them with a clean towel. Always do this before preparing or eating meals, and after coughing, sneezing and using the toilet. Find more tips at www.cdc.gov/handwashing/.

It's Almost Time to Fight the Flu



It's never too early (or too late) to get protected from the flu. Flu, or influenza, vaccination continues throughout the flu season, even in January or later. Flu season can begin as early as October, typically peaks in late November through March, and can occur as late as May.

What are the benefits of the flu vaccination? Flu shots protect against the 3 or 4 most common influenza viruses identified each season. When the vaccine closely matches circulating flu viruses, the Centers for Disease Control reports that vaccination can keep you from getting sick from influenza, and significantly reduce flu-related hospitalizations and deaths among those with heart disease, diabetes and chronic lung disease.

With a few exceptions, everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year, preferably by the end of October. If you are pregnant, ask your provider about getting a flu shot as part of your prenatal care.

And don't let an egg allergy stop you from getting the flu shot. A yearly flu shot is your best protection from flu. However, flu vaccine is grown in eggs and contains a tiny bit of egg protein — so people allergic to eggs have long been warned to avoid flu shots. But dozens of studies involving thousands of people with egg allergy revealed the vaccine doesn't contain enough egg protein to cause a reaction. **Bottom line:** American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology guidelines affirm that people allergic to eggs can safely get a flu shot.

Did you know? The CDC reported that flu shots in 2018 were estimated to have prevented 7.1 million illnesses, 3.7 million medical visits, 109,000 hospitalizations and 8,000 deaths.



For ages 18 years and younger, review the 2019 immunization recommendations with your child's provider. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/. Some parents worry about the side effects of immunizing. Vaccines build immunity by imitating an infection that causes your system to produce antibodies to the disease. Vaccination can sometimes cause minor symptoms, such as fever; this is normal and expected as the body builds immunity to the disease. Serious reactions are rare.

Not immunizing puts children at risk for contracting serious diseases. And it can result in a resurgence of some diseases, most recently measles and whooping cough. Questions? Learn more from your child's health care provider now. Request a vaccination record form to keep your kids safely immunized, on schedule.

Vaccinations at Every Age



You never outgrow your need for protection against disease. Routine screening and immunizations are primary health goals for everyone. Several vaccines are needed in childhood. Adults also need them to prevent some illnesses, such as tetanus and influenza, or when traveling abroad to high-risk countries.

No. 1 reason to vaccinate: The immediate benefit is individual immunity — it provides long-term protection against serious, often life-threatening diseases.

The secondary benefit: To prevent epidemics of serious diseases around the globe and eventually eradicate them. Because of vaccination, smallpox no longer exists in the U.S. and polio may soon be gone worldwide; diphtheria and whooping cough have been reduced to very low levels. But abroad some diseases are still common, such as measles, and travelers can be exposed to or bring these diseases into the U.S.

For normal-risk adults, the CDC recommends the following immunizations. The number of vaccine-preventable diseases keeps growing as researchers learn more about what causes them. People at increased risk may need earlier or more frequent screenings based on their health care provider's advice.

Hepatitis A	2 or 3 doses if at risk
Hepatitis B	2 or 3 doses if at risk
Human papilloma virus (HPV)	2 or 3 doses (depending on age at first vaccination)
Influenza	1 dose every year
Measles/mumps/rubella	1 or 2 doses if at risk
Meningococcal meningitis	1 or more doses if at risk, as advised
Pneumococcal PCV13	1 dose
Pneumococcal PPSV23	1 or 2 doses as advised
Tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis	Tdap 1 dose; Td booster every 10 years
Varicella (chickenpox)	2 doses if at risk
Zoster (shingles)	2 doses at 50 or older



August is Immunization Awareness Month.