

More severe flu season predicted: Time for flu vaccine now!

by Doug Puder, MD

Oh we just don't do flu vaccine! We often hear this from parents who trust our advice about everything else. They believe that other vaccines are life saving, but the *flu* is no big deal. Parents may say "flu vaccine doesn't work" or "I get sick from it" or "I never get the flu"...

With relaxed masking and social distancing and after two mild flu seasons, we may have a more severe flu season this winter. Children likely have less antibody to the *flu* than in the past. So please reconsider protecting yourself, your children, and your community!

In 2019, 105 children died from *influenza* and over 80% of them were unvaccinated. Half of them were previously healthy children. *Flu (influenza)* vaccine is strongly recommended for **all** children over age six months and **all** adults (CDC, AAP, ACIP).

You cannot get sick from flu vaccine:

It is not a live vaccine so it cannot make you sick! We use single dose, thimerosal free, *influenza* vaccine. Our *flu* vaccines cover the four *influenza* strains predicted to be most likely circulating this winter. (Two *influenza A* strains and two *influenza B* strains).

No need to worry about egg allergy:

Studies proved that even severely egg allergic children and adults can safely receive *influenza* vaccine without increased reaction. We have safely immunized many egg allergic children.

Please take flu vaccine to protect others:

Protect yourself, your children, and those around you. If you become infected with *influenza* virus, you will be contagious for one day *before you get sick*. What if someone else caught the *flu* from you and got a serious complication? A fragile baby? An elderly person?

Can't I just take Tamiflu or Xofluza if I get sick?

We may recommend oseltamivir (*Tamiflu*) or baloxavir (*Xofluza*) for those who develop the *flu*, especially when we start them in the first 48 hours. But antivirals are not a substitute for vaccination!

Flumist is back! Is Your Child Afraid of the Shot?

It is a nasal spray which works as well as the shot. Manufacturing issues were resolved and it was re-approved in the fall of 2019. It is an option for healthy people age 2 to 50.

But why did my child still get the flu last winter?

Most of the time flu vaccine gives full protection against influenza strains predicted to come to our area. But sometimes the virus changes (mutates) or is different than what scientists predict. Even then, vaccinated people have milder illness. **Most serious flu complications in healthy children happen when they are not vaccinated.**

Oh we always get a flu vaccine! (And COVID vaccine)

Maybe it's time to stop saying no to flu vaccine. Be well!



**All of our
doctors, nurses,
and staff get
FLU vaccine
every year!
(without reactions)**



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