

VNA COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE & HOSPICE

TAKE HOME FACTS: FLU VACCINE

What is Influenza?

Influenza (flu) is a serious lung disease caused by a virus, which spreads from person to person. Influenza can cause:

- Fever
- Cough
- Muscle aches
- Chills
- Headache
- Sore throat

It can also lead to pneumonia and death. Influenza can make people of any age ill. Although most people are ill for only a few days, some have a more serious illness and need to be hospitalized. Thousands die each year from influenza-related illnesses. Most deaths from influenza are in people over the age of 50.

Who Should Get the Vaccine?

- All persons aged 6 months and older
- Adults and children with chronic medical conditions
- Anyone taking long-term steroids, receiving cancer treatment or with HIV infection
- Children and teenagers on long-term aspirin therapy.
- Household members (including children) and caregivers of all at-risk persons
- Health care workers
- Residents and employees of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- Students and others in institutional settings
- Pregnant women
- Anyone who wants to decrease the chance of getting the flu
- Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

Will the Vaccine Keep Me from Getting the Flu?

- The vaccination will protect most people from most strains of influenza. Since the virus changes frequently, the vaccine is updated yearly.
- The vaccine will begin to provide its protective effect after one or two weeks and will last several months.
- Flu shots will not protect all persons who get them against influenza, but should at least decrease the severity of the illness.
- Flu shots will not protect you against other illnesses, which may resemble the flu.

Components of the 2020-2021 Vaccine

All influenza vaccines this year are quadrivalent and protect you against strains of influenza expected to be most prevalent each year. Quadrivalent (four-component) egg-based vaccines, contain the following: - an A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus, - an A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus, - a B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus, and a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (Yamagata lineage) virus. Quadrivalent cell vaccines contain the following: -an A/Hawaii/70/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus,- an A/Hong Kong/45/2019 (H3N2)-like virus,- a B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus, and a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (Yamagata lineage) virus.

Flu Vaccines designed specifically for individuals 65 years and older:

- **Fluzone High Dose:** Quadrivalent vaccine that contains four times the amount of antigen contained in regular flu shots. The additional antigen is intended to create a stronger immune response (more antibodies) in the individual getting the vaccine.
- **Fluad:** Quadrivalent flu vaccine that contains an adjuvant, MF59. An adjuvant is an ingredient added to a vaccine that helps create a stronger immune response to vaccination.

Possible Side Effects

Most people have no side effects from the flu shot. The most common reaction is soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site for a day or two. Occasionally, persons may experience a fever or achiness for one or two days. As with any drug or vaccine, there is a slight possibility that an allergic reaction, or even death, could occur. **THE VACCINE CANNOT CAUSE INFLUENZA. RESPIRATORY ILLNESS AFTER VACCINATION IS COINCIDENTAL AND UNRELATED.**

DO NOT TAKE THIS SHOT IF:

- YOU HAVE A SEVERE ALLERGY TO EGGS or LATEX
- YOU HAVE EVER HAD A SERIOUS REACTION TO A FLU SHOT.
- YOU HAVE A FEVER. (Delay the shot until the fever is gone.)

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING THE SHOT IF:

- YOU HAVE EVER HAD GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME
- YOU ARE PREGNANT OR NURSING.

QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions about influenza or the influenza vaccination ask now or call your physician or local Department of Health before requesting this vaccine.

REACTIONS:

If you become ill and visit the doctor, hospital or clinic in the four weeks after today's shot, please report this to VNA Community Healthcare & Hospice.



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