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## **Health Care Personnel and Influenza Immunization Another Way To Show How Much You Care**

- **National Health Interview Survey data show 3 out of 5 health care personnel choose to put themselves, their families and their patients at risk for influenza.**
  - **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that all health care personnel receive flu vaccine each year. This is an important step towards protecting the health of your patients, both young and old.**
  - **The information below can help you make the decision to get flu vaccine this year and do your part to help protect yourself, your patients and your family.**
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### **What is influenza or the flu?**

- The flu is a contagious respiratory illness. It spreads easily from person-to-person by coughing or sneezing. Every year in the United States, flu causes more than 226,000 people to be hospitalized, and about 36,000 people die from flu.

### **Why should health care personnel be vaccinated against influenza?**

- Health care personnel are at risk of catching flu from their patients.
- Health care personnel who develop influenza-like illness often continue to work, shedding viruses and exposing colleagues, patients and their family members.
- Unvaccinated health care personnel have caused influenza outbreaks in health care settings.

### **What are the risks from getting flu vaccine? I heard the flu shot can give you the flu.**

- Injectable and intranasal influenza vaccines are available for use in the United States. The viruses in the flu vaccine are killed (injection) or weakened (nasal), so you should not get the flu from the vaccine. The risk of a flu vaccine causing serious harm is extremely small. Almost all people who get influenza vaccine have no serious problems from it. Talk with your physician before receiving flu vaccine if you are allergic to eggs, had an allergic reaction to flu vaccine or a history of Guillian-Barre syndrome.

### **What side effects may occur after receiving vaccine?**

- The most common side effects from the flu shot are soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given, fever (low grade) and aches. If these problems occur, they begin soon after the shot and usually last one to two days.
- The most common side effects from the nasal flu vaccine are a runny nose and nasal congestion.

### **Do I need flu vaccine? I never catch the flu.**

- Yes. Did you know that about half of all influenza infections are asymptomatic? You may have had influenza and not even known it. For those who do become ill, influenza is contagious before symptoms develop.

### **I am pregnant. Can I get a flu vaccine?**

- Yes. All pregnant women are at risk for influenza and its complications. It is especially important that pregnant health care personnel receive vaccine to protect themselves and their babies. Women who are pregnant should receive a flu shot and not nasal flu vaccine. A flu shot may given at any time during the pregnancy.

### **Do I have to get a shot?**

- No, not necessarily, some health care personnel can receive nasal flu vaccine. If you are 5 through 49 years of age, not pregnant and do not have an underlying chronic condition like diabetes or asthma, you may receive the nasal flu vaccine. Health care personnel who care for severely immunosuppressed patients (e.g. hemopoietic stem cell transplant patients) should get the flu shot instead of nasal vaccine.

### **What can I do to help prevent influenza and protect my patients and family?**

- Get vaccinated, and encourage others you work with to be vaccinated too.

**Show How Much You Care- Get Your Flu Vaccine!**