

Wellness @Work

Fall 2011

Flu Prevention

The CDC recommends a three-step approach to fighting influenza. The first and most important step is to get a flu vaccination each year.

Everyday preventative actions may slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory (nose, throat, and lungs) illnesses, like flu.



The “flu shot” is an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

But if you get the flu, there are prescription antiviral drugs that can treat your

illness. Early treatment is especially important for the elderly, the very young, people with certain chronic health conditions, and pregnant women.

What is Flu Vaccine?

Seasonal flu vaccines protect against the three influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season.

The viruses in the vaccine can change each year based on international surveillance and scientists’ estimations about which types and strains of viruses will circulate in a given year.

About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against the influenza viruses in the vaccine develop in the body.

Information specific to the 2011-2012 season, including the vaccine formulation, can be found at www.cdc.gov.



Wellness at Work is an informational publication provided by MED-1 Occupational Health System to facilitate health and wellness initiatives for employees.

For more information on any topics presented or to access additional copies of current or past issues, contact Tammie Milligan at 616.459.1570 or go to — www.med1services.com.

Everyday Prevention

- ✓ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- ✓ Wash your hands often with soap and water. Or, use alcohol-based hand rub.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- ✓ Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- ✓ If you get sick, stay home and seek medical care if necessary.
- ✓ If an outbreak of flu or other illness occurs, follow public health advice.

MED-1 Services

Screenings

- Biometric
- Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Colo-rectal cancer
- PSA

Specialized Programs

- Health risk appraisals
- Immunizations
- Customized worksite programs
- Drug free worksite
- Special exams

Education

- CPR/First Aid training
- AED programs
- Wellness coaching
- Health fairs
- Wellness education

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Flu Facts—Did You Know?

Each year in the United States, 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu; more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related complications, and, about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious flu complications.

Colds vs. Flu

Because colds and flu share many symptoms, it is difficult to tell the difference based on symptoms alone. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.

How it Spreads

The main way influenza viruses spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their mouth or nose before washing their hands. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick. Children may pass the virus for longer than seven days. Symptoms start one to four days after



the virus enters the body. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Some persons can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons may still spread the virus to others.

Preparing for flu season.

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. Getting the flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available each year is always a good idea, and the protection you get from vaccination will last throughout the flu season. While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine is designed to protect against the three main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season. For more information about the 2011-2012 flu season, visit CDC.org.

Who should NOT get a flu shot.

Tell your doctor if you -

- ✓ Have any severe (life-threatening) allergies, including eggs. Allergic reactions to influenza vaccine are rare, but can be serious.
- ✓ Ever had a severe reaction after a dose of influenza vaccine.
- ✓ Ever had Guillain-Barre' Syndrome (a severe paralytic illness, also called GBS).
- ✓ Are moderately or severely ill. You may want to reschedule getting the vaccine.

Who Should Be Vaccinated?

Everyone, but especially:

- ✓ People 65 and older
- ✓ Children 6-23 months
- ✓ Adults and children 2 years of age and older with chronic lung or heart disorders
- ✓ Pregnant women
- ✓ Adults and children 2 years of age and older with chronic medical conditions or weakened immune systems
- ✓ Children and teenagers, 6 months to 18 years of age, who take aspirin daily
- ✓ Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities
- ✓ Caregivers of children less than 6 months old
- ✓ Healthcare workers with direct patient care

Schedule a Flu Clinic

MED-1 is offering seasonal adult flu vaccine for employer companies. MED-1 will administer flu vaccine immunizations at your company site for **\$25 per injection and no hourly fee** (minimum of 12 injections/hour).

If you are interested in providing flu vaccines for your employees, please call us as soon as possible to schedule your on-site flu clinic.

Debbie Parrish
Grand Rapids Area
616.459.1562

Shanna Beltman
Holland Area
616.459.1576