

Facts about Influenza

A fever, chills, cough, body aches, headaches, and sometimes earaches or sinus problems are all symptoms of the flu and for most people go away in a week or two. But the flu can make you very sick, especially if you are a part of the following groups:

- Babies and children under 5 years of age
- People older than 65
- Adults and children who have health problem such as asthma, diabetes, kidney disease, anemia, heart disease or immune deficiency diseases
- Live with someone in any of the high risk groups mentioned above

The flu vaccine is one injection, in the arm, that contains *killed flu* viruses. It takes 1 to 2 weeks after the flu vaccine for your body to make antibodies to protect you from the flu virus. The vaccine *will not* cause you to get the flu but will enable you to fight off the flu infection! Anyone who is severely allergic to eggs or egg products should not get a flu shot. If you have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccination in the past or are, less than 6 months old do not get vaccinated.

How else can you avoid getting the flu?

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, **stay home if you are sick**
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing and or coughing – your elbow works great for coverage!
- **Wash your hands often**
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to prevent the spread of germs
- Never share cups, water bottles or eating utensils

The flu virus is spread in little drops that spray out of an infected person's mouth and nose. So the flu virus can be in the air you breathe or on the surfaces you touch. If you are sick, go to the Dr.; get plenty of rest. Drink lots of fluids. Take medicine your Dr. /parents recommend to ease your fever, aches and pains. Until you are well, you need to stay home from school and take it easy.

Flu vaccines are available at many health care settings, your doctors' office, pharmacies, and supermarkets. Most people do not experience any side effects from the flu shot. But a few may experience soreness or swelling at the injection site or a headache or low grade fever. Remember you cannot catch the flu from the flu shot, it is a killed virus! It is important that, as a parent, you educate before you vaccinate.