



Competent Compounding

September 2010
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Top 10 Facts You Should Know About the 2010 Influenza Vaccine

1. What it protects against:

-Every year, the influenza vaccine protects against three viruses that research suggests will be the most common strains. The 2010-2011 vaccine protects against an influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus, and the 2009 H1N1 virus.

2. When to get vaccinated:

-Influenza vaccination should begin in September (as soon as the vaccine is available) and should continue throughout the influenza season, through December, January, and beyond. This is because the timing and duration of influenza seasons vary. Most of the time influenza activity peaks in January or later.

-It is important to receive the vaccine every year to protect against the most current strains of influenza.

3. Who should be vaccinated:

-**Everyone 6 months of age and older** should be vaccinated against the flu. This is a new recommendation as of 2010. Those individuals who are at high risk of serious flu complications are definitely get vaccinated. High risk individuals include:

-Pregnant women

-Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old

-People 50 years of age and older

-People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, including asthma, arthritis or lupus, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart or kidney disease, or morbid obesity

-People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

-People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including health care workers, household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu, and household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated).

4. Who should NOT be vaccinated:

-There are some people who should not get a flu vaccine without first consulting a physician. These people include:

-People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs.

-People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination.

-People who developed Guillian-Barre syndrome within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccination

-Children less than 6 months of age (influenza vaccine is not approved for this age group)

-People who have a moderate-to-severe illness with a fever (they should wait until they recover to get vaccinated).

5. What you should know about the flu shot:

-This is an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the muscle of the arm.

-This is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

6. What you should know about the nasal-spray flu vaccine:

-This is a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (called live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) or FluMist®).



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-This is approved for use in healthy people 2-49 years old.
-Pregnant women, people 50 years and older, children 5 years and younger with a history of recurrent wheezing, children or adolescents receiving aspirin therapy, and people with certain health conditions, such as arthritis, asthma, HIV/AIDS, should not receive FluMist® and should instead receive the flu shot.

7. Vaccine side effects:

-The flu shot: The viruses in the flu shot are killed (inactivated), so you cannot get the flu from a flu shot. Some minor side effects that can occur include soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site; a low grade fever; and/or aches. On rare occasion, the flu shot can cause a severe allergic reaction. This usually occurs within 15 minutes of administration. Because of this rare reaction, it is important to remain in the pharmacy for 15 minutes after receiving the flu shot so that the pharmacist can assist you if a severe reaction occurs.

-The nasal spray: The viruses in the nasal-spray vaccine are weakened and do not cause severe symptoms often associated with the flu. Side effects can include runny nose, wheezing, headache, vomiting, muscle aches, fever, sore throat, and cough.

8. Signs and symptoms of the flu:

-The signs and symptoms of the flu can be confused with the signs and symptoms of a cold. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold and can lead to other serious health problems. The signs and symptoms of the flu can include fever, coughing and/or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches and/or body aches, chills, and fatigue.

9. If you get the flu:

-Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze to keep from spreading flu viruses to others. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

-Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol based hand cleaners are also effective.

-Stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100°F or 37.8°C) or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®).

-Take antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them. Antiviral drugs may be especially important for people who are sick and have a health condition that places them at greater risk of flu complications. For maximum effectiveness, antiviral drugs should be taken as soon as possible after symptoms begin.

10. The pharmacists at Specialty Medicine Compounding Pharmacy can administer your influenza vaccination! Kenny or Leslie are available during all store hours to administer flu shots to individuals who are 18 years of age and older.

Did you know? National Influenza Vaccination Week is December 5-11, 2010.

For more information, ask your Specialty Medicine pharmacy staff or visit the following websites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

<http://www.flu.gov>

<http://www.flumist.com/>



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