

FLU AND PNEUMONIA VACCINES

Influenza (flu) and pneumococcal pneumonia (pneumonia) are infections that can be avoided by vaccination. These infections have a significant impact on the health of Americans each year and are associated with some serious complications that include hospitalization and even death in some cases. Because individuals with long-term health conditions, such as diabetes, are at greater risk for contracting these infections, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting a flu and pneumonia vaccine. Based on your personal health history, your physician can make recommendations about the potential benefits of these vaccines. There are rare instances when vaccination is not recommended.

The CDC has issued the following vaccine information:

Influenza (Flu) Vaccine:

- The flu vaccine is updated every year because influenza viruses change often.
- It is best to get a flu shot each year in October before the peak flu season, which is anytime between December and March.
- The inactivated (killed) virus is given as a shot and stimulates your immune system to develop protection against the virus. Protection takes about 2 weeks to develop. Even if you get the flu before you are immune, it will be a milder case.
- The flu vaccine can be given at the same time as other vaccines (including the pneumococcal vaccine).
- The flu vaccine is recommended for people with long-term health conditions (including diabetes, kidney, heart or lung disease). See the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/flu for a complete listing of recommendations or call (800) 232-2522 (English) or (800) 232-0233 (Spanish).
- Please talk to your physician before getting a vaccination if you: 1) ever had a serious allergic reaction to eggs or a previous dose of influenza vaccine, or 2) have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS).
- The risks from inactivated influenza vaccines are rare but could include a severe allergic reaction. The inactivated flu vaccine viruses are killed viruses and you cannot get influenza from the vaccine. Mild problems such as soreness, redness or swelling at injection site, fever and aches may occur but last only 1-2 days.
- Please discuss the flu vaccine and any related concerns with your physician and remember, if the flu vaccine is recommended, to schedule it in October.

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV):

- The pneumococcal vaccine (PPV) protects against 23 types of bacterial pneumonia and their complications, including meningitis and infection in the blood stream (bacteremia)
- Prevention against pneumonia is important because some antibiotics are not as effective in treating these infections as they once were.
- People over 2 years of age who have long-term conditions such as diabetes, kidney, heart or lung disease should have a pneumonia vaccine. See the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/nip for a complete list of recommendations or call (800) 232-2522 (English) or (800) 232-0233 (Spanish).
- A pneumococcal vaccine provides longer immunity than the flu vaccine. Your physician will advise you if this vaccine will need to be repeated in 5 years.
- Sometimes there are mild side effects such as tenderness or redness at the injection site. Less than 1 out of 100 people develop fever, muscle aches or more severe local reactions. Severe allergic reactions are rare. Please discuss any concerns with your physician.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HEALTHY INITIATIVES

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