



U.S. Public Health Service Nursing Tip of the Month January 2019 Influenza Vaccination



Vaccine Importance

It is that time of year again when Back to School and Change of Seasons brings the coughs, sneezes, and sniffles. Harmful germs and viruses can be detrimental to families and communities. As health care providers, it is our responsibility to help educate the public and keep our communities safe. The simple act of getting vaccinated helps protect ourselves, those around us, and our loved ones.

Influenza is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently, but millions of people get the flu every year, hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized and thousands or tens of thousands of people die from flu-related causes every year. An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to help protect against the flu. Vaccination has been shown to have many benefits including reducing the risk of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and even the risk of flu-related death in children.

How does it protect? Seasonal Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against the most common influenza viruses that research indicates will be the most common during the upcoming season. Click for additional information: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

By getting vaccinated, we can prevent the spread of flu to those at greatest risk for becoming dangerously ill, including young children, pregnant women, people 65 and older, and those with certain medical conditions. Americans experienced one of the most severe flu seasons in four decades last year with flu activity remaining high well into March 2018. Millions of Americans became sick with the flu, an estimated 900,000 were hospitalized, and 80,000 died from flu and its complications. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/current.htm>

Experts agree that the flu vaccine is the single best way to protect you and your loved ones against the flu. If you are vaccinated, you are less likely to get the flu. If you do get sick, studies show that when you are vaccinated, your illness will likely be milder, which helps keep you out of the hospital. <https://www.hhs.gov/blog/2018/10/10/never-miss-a-flu-vaccine-here-are-the-reasons-whyifightflu.html>

Quick Flu facts:

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against influenza and its potentially serious complications.
- While there are many different flu viruses, flu vaccines protect against the 3 or 4 viruses that research suggests will be most common. Three-component vaccines contain an H3N2, an H1N1 and a B virus. Four component vaccines have an additional B virus component. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/settings.htm>.
- Influenza vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to flu as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccine-benefits.htm>
- Flu vaccination also has been shown to significantly reduce a child's risk of dying from influenza.
- Data suggests that even if someone gets sick after vaccination, their illness may be milder.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every year before flu activity begins in their community. CDC recommends getting vaccinated by the end of October. Learn more about vaccine timing <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/vaccinations.htm#when-vaccinate>.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. Studies have shown that flu vaccination of the mother during pregnancy can protect the baby after birth from flu infection for several months. People who live with or care for infants should be vaccinated.

Vaccination is extremely important for health care workers, please remember your impact on public health and advocating disease prevention minimizing risk to people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to them is essential in keeping our communities healthy. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/healthcareworkers.htm>.

Point of contact: CAPT Casey Hadsall, CDR Jonathan Paulsel, CDR Malini Krishnan and LCDR Anastasia Hansen for the

Tip of the Month Workgroup, N-PAC Career Development Subcommittee.

TO REQUEST A MENTOR

PHS-NURSE LIST SERV