

Influenza

What's It All About?

Influenza is commonly known as the 'flu,' but other than that, it's not a very well-known virus. In fact, many people confuse a bad cold with the flu – but influenza is a lot more serious!

People who should get an influenza shot:

- Anyone, including school-aged children, who wants to prevent influenza
- Adults and children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, weakened immune system, diabetes and others
- Children 6 – 59 months of age
- Children 6 months – 18 years of age who are on long-term aspirin treatment
- Women who are pregnant during the influenza season
- Household members and caregivers of people at high risk, including caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age who are too young to be vaccinated
- Adults 50 years of age and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities and nursing homes
- Healthcare providers who come in contact with patients

Did you know about 36,000 Americans die every year from influenza or influenza-related complications?

To prevent these deaths, the CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination for approximately 218 million people in the United States, including people at high risk of suffering influenza-related complications, healthcare workers and others.

But only 45 percent of the CDC's targeted population is vaccinated each year. So let's put this in some perspective:

- The annual U.S. flu death toll of 36,000 is almost equivalent to the 42,000 Americans who die annually from breast cancer.
- 36,000 is nearly half of the 73,000 Americans who die annually from diabetes and its complications.
- 36,000 is more than double the 17,000 AIDS deaths in the U.S. each year.

That's kind of startling, isn't it? If you could help prevent those 36,000 deaths, wouldn't you?

Sure you would – and you can!

Just get a flu shot. And make sure everyone you care about gets their shots, too. It's better than becoming a statistic. You can even get a shot in February, and it will help, because about 45 percent of cases occur that month.



Schedule your flu shot at www.MyFluVaccine.com or call your healthcare provider.

To learn more, visit www.MyFluVaccine.com, www.FamiliesFightingFlu.org and www.FacesofInfluenza.org.

Other ways you can prevent the flu

By following these basic guidelines – and getting your flu shot – you can play an important role in helping to prevent the spread of influenza.

- Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze – then throw it out
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing
- If you're sick, stay home
- If you have been exposed to the flu or begin to have symptoms, see your doctor immediately for antiviral treatment
- Avoid close contact

Practice these other good health habits:

- Get plenty of sleep
- Be physically active
- Practice stress management
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Eat nutritious food