

10 Reasons to Immunize Your Family against Influenza



1. It's your responsibility to protect your family.

The best way to protect your family from influenza, also called the flu, is by getting everyone in your household vaccinated. Even the healthiest child who's never had seasonal influenza is at risk and needs to be vaccinated. It's that simple.

2. Influenza is more serious than you think.

Influenza claims the lives of about 100 children in the U.S. every year and hospitalizes around 20,000. About half of children who die because of influenza were previously healthy. And influenza is the 8th-leading cause of death in the United States among people of all ages.

3. Influenza can worsen chronic medical conditions – don't put your family's health at risk.

Influenza immunization is especially important for people with compromised immune systems or certain underlying medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease. Influenza can worsen these conditions or cause serious complications in people who have them.

4. Immunizing the family helps protect vulnerable infants.

Children less than 6 months of age are too young to be vaccinated against influenza, but they are at the greatest risk of hospitalization for it. To create a protective "cocoon" of immunity around unvaccinated infants, parents should get older siblings, themselves and all other close contacts of the baby immunized.

5. Keep your kids at school and yourself at work, where you belong.

Children have plenty to worry about without having to catch up on missed school work, a big game, the prom or graduation. And when kids miss school, parents often lose work days to care for them.

6. Your child doesn't live in a bubble.

Children share close quarters inside schools and child care facilities. And let's face it – their hygiene habits are usually less than stellar! Your child is constantly touching, playing and sharing with others. It's no wonder more children get influenza every year than people of any other age group. So when you can't be there to protect your child, the vaccine is.

7. Why keep taking the annual seasonal influenza gamble?

This could be the year your luck runs out. To prevent influenza, place your bet on immunizing your child.

8. Getting your family immunized is easy.

In addition to your primary health care professional, many local hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, retail stores and even some employers hold vaccination clinics. To find a clinic nearby, visit <http://flucliniclocator.org> or <http://aafa.org/flu.cfm>.

9. The influenza vaccine is safe and effective.

Seasonal influenza vaccine is safe, time tested and made in the same way every year. Of course, as with all medications, vaccines can be associated with some mild, short-term side effects. Immunization is the best way to prevent influenza. The influenza vaccine can reduce chances of getting the flu by 70 to 90 percent and, if someone gets vaccinated but still gets the flu, chances are they will get a less severe case.

10. Why not?

Given that influenza immunization is such a simple and safe way to help protect your child's health, why not take advantage of it?

