

Health Alerts



Dear Patient,

The flu is an illness that anyone can catch. People who get the flu usually have a fever and overall body aches. They can also have headaches, sore throats and coughs. More serious complications include pneumonia. People, who have other health problems which include diabetes, asthma, and cancer, as well as the very young and the very old, are at increased risk for developing more severe disease. Every year, 30-40,000 people die as a result of getting this infection in this country.

We would like to inform you about how to both protect yourself and if needed, be treatment for the “Flu”.

To understand how to protect your self, it is good to know how the infection is spread. The flu is caused by a virus, which infects the respiratory tract. This virus is transmitted between people both through the air we breathe as well as physical contact (handshaking, kissing, sharing cups, sharing food, etc.)

The most important ways in which we can protect ourselves from getting sick with the flu is through immunization (the flu shot) and avoiding exposure to infected people. This year there will be 2 different flu shots, the regular “seasonal” flu shot as well as a shot for the “novel H1N1”, or swine flu. To be protected this year it will be necessary to receive both of these immunizations. Both of these can be obtained through this office.

Many people have concerns about the safety of these immunizations. **While some people should not receive flu shots (people with allergies to eggs, previous severe reactions to flu shots), EVERYONE WHO CAN GET A FLU SHOT THIS YEAR SHOULD GET BOTH.** Before getting the flu shots, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire to make sure you can safely receive it. The risk of contracting the flu and developing a severe infection is much greater than the risk of developing a severe reaction to the flu shot.

If you are one of our patients you do not need to see your doctor to get these. We do recommend you call before coming in for your flu shot so that your wait time will be minimal. If you have, or think you have the flu, it important that you take measures to avoid spreading it to others. Keeping away from other people as much as possible reduces the chances of your spreading the infection. Staying home from work, school and public places at least until your fever has been gone for 24 hours (without using Tylenol, Advil or other medications) will help reduce your chances of spreading the flu to others.

Treatment for the flu includes supportive measures, monitoring for complications and anti-viral medications. Hospitals are asking patients who have the flu or flu symptoms to avoid going to the emergency room or visiting family or friends who are in the hospital. We have the same requests for our office, but know that when you have the flu, seeing your doctor can be helpful. For this reason, we ask that you make sure to tell our staff when you make your appointment, and also when you arrive, that you may have the flu. We will ask that you wear a mask while you are in the office, and will make every effort to keep you away from other patients while you are here with us.

We hope that you do not get sick this year, but know if you do that we are here to help you. Please call our office if you have any questions. Thank you!

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