

Let's Talk About Flu Vaccines!

Illinois Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



✓ What does a flu vaccine do?

A flu vaccine protects against the influenza virus, a contagious respiratory illness that infects the nose, throat, and lungs.

✓ How do I know that they are safe for my kids?

The CDC and FDA continuously monitor vaccine safety and have done so for decades! The flu vaccine is so routine and well-tested. It is recommended that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated every year!

✓ Do flu vaccines cause the flu?

That's something a lot of people have heard, but it is not true! Some people may have light side effects like soreness or redness on the shot area, a slight fever, a headache, or sometimes muscle aches, but this is all a sign our bodies are recognizing the flu virus and building up a defense system in case the real thing comes along! The side effects usually go away quickly – much quicker than the flu lasts!

✓ If it can cause side effects, how is that any better than getting the flu?

That's an understandable question! While the flu vaccine doesn't prevent everyone from getting the flu, it greatly reduces the chance of getting severely ill from the flu. It also reduces the chance of hospitalization and the risk of death from the flu. So why take that chance? Save yourself and your little ones from serious complications by getting the flu vaccine today!

✓ When should my kids get their flu shot?

The best time for everyone to get their flu shot is during the fall, sometime during September or October, this is to help make sure you're protected before the flu is going around. Remember, everyone 6 months and older should get their flu shot every year.

✓ Where can I get a flu vaccine?

Luckily, the flu vaccine is very easy to find! You can contact your child's pediatrician, your local health department, or even your local pharmacy to book a fast and easy flu vaccine appointment.



How can I help my child get through their shot?

No one likes shots and it is hard watching your little go through getting one, but there are ways to make it a little easier on them and you! Try these tips:



Physical Touch Hold young children securely, offer a hand to squeeze or a comforting embrace to older children, plan to breastfeed your baby right after their shot.



Words of Affirmation Be honest. Give reassurance during the vaccine and praise after. Let them know why it is important to get their vaccines.



Quality Time Be patient and make sure the person getting vaccinated is comfortable. You can let them spend some quality time with a friend after.



Acts of Service Provide a distraction – tell a story or sing a song. For older kids you can offer to cook them dinner or clean their room.



Gift Giving Offer a sweet treat, fun sticker, or small toy for a job well done! Older kids and adults may also enjoy a thoughtful small gift.