

Influenza Vaccine

What is Influenza?

Influenza (Flu) is a contagious respiratory illness that is caused by a virus. It can be either mild or severe, and can in serious cases lead to death. 5% to 20% of the population will suffer from the flu yearly, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized, and 36,000 individuals die annually from this condition. A flu vaccination is the best way to prevent this from occurring. The flu virus can cause employees to miss 1-2 weeks of work even without complications.

Preventing the Flu with vaccination



The most effective way to prevent the flu is through vaccination. OMP uses an inactivated (killed virus) vaccine that is given by needle injection in the upper arm (Deltoid). The vaccination should be administered in the fall (October and November being the best months). Getting vaccinated through February may still be beneficial since the flu most commonly occurs in January or later months.

Picture 1: Influenza vaccine

Who should get vaccinated

Any individual wanting to reduce their risk of contracting the flu can inquire about the vaccination. Certain people who are in a high risk group of having flu complications or who are in close contact with those at high risk should seriously consider the vaccination. Individuals who are at high risk for flu complications include:

Individuals \geq 50 years of age

Pregnant women

Nursing home or long term care residents

People with chronic medical conditions

People who are in close proximity of high risk individuals include:

Caregivers

Household contacts at high risk for flu

Workers in the health care industry

Household members < 6months of age



Picture 2: The influenza vaccine is given in the upper arm (Deltoid).

Who should *not* receive the vaccine

Certain individuals need to consult with their personal care physician before receiving the vaccination.

Individuals with severe allergy to chicken/eggs

Those with severe reaction to past influenza vaccine

Children < 6 months of age

People with moderate to severe illness or current fever

People who developed Guillian Barre Syndrome within 6 weeks of the flu vaccine

Side effects of the vaccine

The flu shot: The flu shot may produce several of the following symptoms. These generally last 1-2 days. Very few patients suffer from serious side effects. This vaccine will *not* cause the flu because the vaccine is not a live virus.

Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given

Low grade fever

Aches

OMP highly recommends annual flu shots as part of a company's health and productivity management program.