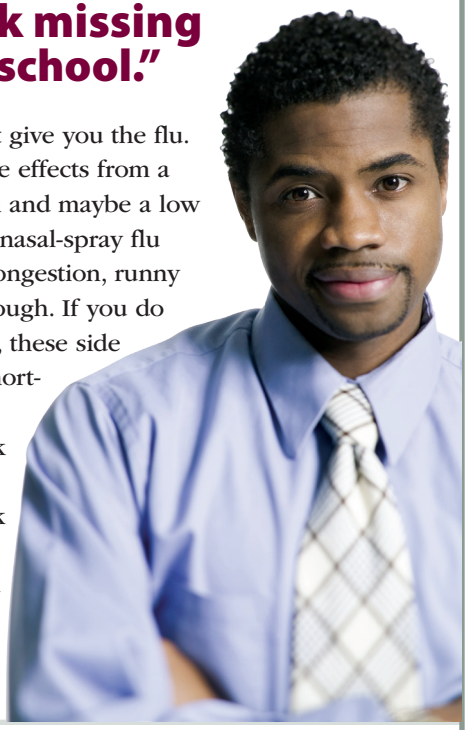
No More Excuses
You Need a Flu Vaccine

"Oh, the flu isn't so bad...right?"

Wrong The flu (influenza) is a contagious disease which affects the lungs and can lead to serious illness, including pneumonia. While pregnant women, young children, older people, and people with certain chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes and heart disease are at increased risk of serious flu-related complications, *even healthy people* can get sick enough to miss work or school for a significant amount of time or even be hospitalized.

"But what if the flu vaccine makes me sick?

I can't risk missing work or school."



The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. The most common side effects from a flu shot are a sore arm and maybe a low fever or achiness. The nasal-spray flu vaccine might cause congestion, runny nose, sore throat, or cough. If you do experience them at all, these side effects are mild and short-lived. And that's much better than getting sick and missing several days of school or work or possibly getting a very severe illness and needing to go to the hospital.

"I'm Healthy

I don't need a flu vaccine."

Anyone can become sick with the flu and experience serious complications. Older people, young children, pregnant women and people with medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or kidney disease are at especially high risk from the flu, but kids, teens and adults who are active and healthy also can get the flu and become very ill from it. Flu viruses are unpredictable, and every season puts **you** at risk. Besides, you might be around someone who's at high risk from the flu…a baby…your grandparents, or even a friend. *You don't want to be the one spreading flu, do you?*

"Wait a minute

I got a flu vaccine once and still got sick."

Even if you got a flu vaccine, there are still reasons why you might have felt flu-like symptoms:

- You may have been exposed to a *non-flu virus* before or after you got vaccinated. The flu vaccine can only prevent illnesses caused by flu viruses. It cannot protect against non-flu viruses.

- Or you might have been exposed to flu after you got vaccinated but *before the vaccine took effect*. It takes about two weeks after you receive the vaccine for your body to build protection against the flu.
- Or you may have been exposed to an influenza virus that was very different from the viruses included in that year's vaccine. The flu vaccine protects against the three influenza viruses that research indicates will cause the most disease during the upcoming season, but there can be other flu viruses circulating.

National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases

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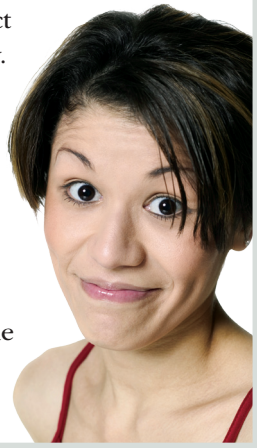
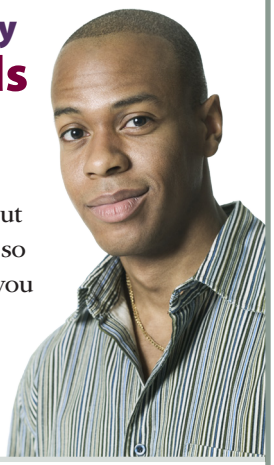
"It's too late for me to get protection from a flu vaccination this season."

Flu seasons are unpredictable. They can begin early in the fall and last late into the spring. As long as flu season isn't over, it's not too late to get vaccinated, even during the winter. Getting a flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your family. If you miss getting your flu vaccine in the fall, make it a New Year's resolution—flu season doesn't usually peak until January or February and can last until May. The flu vaccine offers protection for you all season long.



"I'll get vaccinated only if my family and friends get sick with flu."



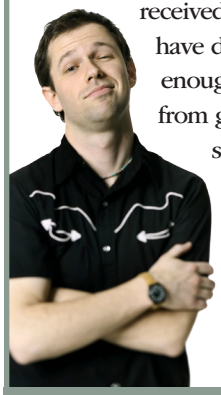
If you wait until people around you get sick from flu, it will probably be too late to protect yourself. It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to provide full protection, so the sooner you get vaccinated, the more likely it is that you will be fully protected once the flu begins to circulate in your community. Flu vaccines are easy to find. They are offered in various locations like your doctor's office, chain pharmacies, grocery stores, and health clinics.

"I hate shots."

The very minor pain of a flu shot is nothing compared to the suffering that can be caused by the flu. The flu can make you very sick for several days; send you to the hospital, or worse. For most healthy, non-pregnant people ages 2 through 49 years old, the nasal-spray flu vaccine is a great choice for people who don't like shots. Either way, a shot or spray can prevent you from catching the flu. So, whatever little discomfort you feel from the minor side effects of the flu vaccine is worthwhile to avoid the flu.

"I got a flu vaccine last year, so I don't need another one."

Your body's level of immunity from a vaccine received last season is expected to have declined. You may not have enough immunity to be protected from getting sick this season. You should get vaccinated again to protect yourself against the three viruses that research suggests are likely to circulate again this season.



"I don't trust that the vaccine is safe."

Flu vaccines have been given for more than 50 years and they have a very good safety track record. Flu vaccines are made the same way each year and their safety is closely monitored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration. Hundreds of millions of flu vaccines have been given safely.

For more information, visit

http://www.flu.gov

http://www.cdc.gov/flu

or call

800-CDC-INFO