

The Flu and You...



It is Fall and flu season is on the way.

Flu is an annual epidemic that can effect your entire family.

Let United Health Professionals help you get prepared!

What is the flu?

Influenza, commonly known as “the flu”, is caused by a virus that infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). It is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Unlike many other viruses, such as the common cold, the flu causes severe illness and life-threatening complications in some people. Influenza is responsible for 36,000 deaths per year in the United States. Those over 65 years of age and under 2 years of age are at greatest risk for flu related deaths. **Influenza vaccination is the primary method for preventing influenza and its severe complications.**

Flu or Cold?

It can be difficult to tell the difference between the flu and the common cold. The symptoms of the common cold are generally less severe than the flu. The flu results in fever, body aches, extreme fatigue, and dry cough. The common cold may cause a runny or stuffy nose. Children can have symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea in addition to the more common flu symptoms. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations, but the flu can.

How can I keep from getting the flu?

There is a vaccine to help prevent the flu. Since the flu virus is constantly changing, the flu vaccine must keep changing. Therefore, it is recommended that the following high risk groups be vaccinated each year:

- Children ages 6 –59 months old
- Pregnant women
- Adults 50 years old and over
- Health care workers
- People with weakened immune systems or long term health problems (such as AIDS patients or cancer patients)
- Teachers or daycare workers caring for children ages 0-59 months old

The flu vaccine should be consider for the following if there is an adequate supply of vaccine:

- Students living in dormitories or other people who live in crowded conditions
- People who provide essential community services
- People who provide care for those in high risk groups
- Others who would like to reduce their risk of getting the flu

Children may need two doses of flu vaccine. Most adults only need one.

You should not get the flu shot if you are allergic to eggs or other components of the influenza vaccine without consulting your physician.

When should I get vaccinated?

We will begin giving flu vaccine in mid October. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends you be vaccinated in October or November.

If you have questions or concerns about the flu vaccine, talk to your health care provider.

Dr. Ben Allan is a Family Doctor associated with Dr. Allan Chamberlain, Dr. Amber Kuhl, Dr. Debra Stultz, and Dr. Mitchell Nutt at United Health Professionals in Huntington. Dr. Allan is accepting new patients of all ages. Dr. Allan would be honored to care for your family. Call today for your appointment...**304-697-2035!**



Dr. Ben Allan