

# Flu Shot 2008-2009

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## *What Is Influenza?*

Influenza is a virus that is characterized by the abrupt onset of fever, chills, muscle aches and sore throat. The disease can lead to other illness such as pneumonia, especially in those over 65. It has been estimated that 20,000 to 40,000 Americans die each year because of the influenza virus.

## *When Does The Influenza Virus Infection Occur?*

The influenza virus causes infection most commonly from the months of December through March.

## *Why Is The Flu Shot Given?*

The flu shot is given to limit the incidence of disease and reduce time missed from work and school. This is a primary prevention method.

## *Who Should Receive The Influenza Vaccine?*

- Adults and children with chronic disorders of the cardiovascular or pulmonary systems such as asthma, or those with metabolic diseases such as diabetes mellitus, kidney dysfunction, anemia or immunosuppression.
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

- Physicians, nurses, and other personnel who have extensive contact with chronically ill people.
- Healthy individuals over 65 years of age.
- Persons who wish to reduce their chances of acquiring influenza infection.
- Persons who provide essential community services, (e.g. fire and police department personnel).

## *When Should One Obtain The Influenza Vaccine?*

The earlier the better. The vaccine is usually given beginning in the month of September.

## *Who Should Not Be Given The Influenza Vaccine?*

The flu vaccine should not be used in pregnant women, infants less than 6 months of age or those who are allergic to eggs.

## *Can The Influenza Vaccine Cause The Flu?*

No, because the influenza vaccine contains only inactivated virus particles that are non-infectious.

## *What Are Side Effects Of The Flu Vaccination?*

Rarely, pain and swelling at the site of injection, and occasionally a fever.

## *How Is The Flu Vaccine Given?*

Children from the age of 6 months to 8 years of age should receive two doses one month apart. All other individuals receive just one dose. The second dose in children should be administered before December, if possible.

## *Can Children Obtain The Flu Shot At The Same Time They Receive Their Other Vaccinations?*

Yes, no additional problems have been seen by giving the regular childhood immunizations along with the flu shot.

**We at Sobel Family Medicine & Physical Therapy believe the influenza vaccine should be given to all those individuals listed above.**

In addition we recommend the influenza vaccination to help prevent disease, reduce time taken from work and school, and lessen the incidence of unnecessary death.