

Protect Your Family from the FLU!

Family flu protection starts with children

The flu is highly contagious, and people who have it can spread it to others even before they have symptoms. Almost everyone is at risk of being infected with the influenza virus. School-aged children are particularly at risk of getting the flu. School-aged children are also likely to spread the virus to others in their home and community. That's why vaccination is so important — when you vaccinate your children against the flu, you not only help protect them, but also yourself and your family.

Who should get a flu shot? In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting the flu can get vaccinated. However, certain people should get vaccinated each year.

1. Flu shots are recommended for children and adults age 2 years and older with ongoing medical conditions such as:
 - Asthma, or other lung diseases
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Kidney disease
 - Blood diseases
 - Immune problems caused by HIV, cancer or other diseases
 - Long-term aspirin treatment
2. Flu shots are recommended for all children from 6 months to 23 months of age. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, young children have one of the highest rates of hospitalization due to the flu.

When should my children get flu shots? The flu season typically lasts from November through March. The best time to get the flu shot is in October or November. But getting a flu shot in December or later will still protect your child. Children younger than 9 years being immunized for the first time need two doses of vaccine approximately one month apart to ensure full protection.

Do my children have to get a shot to be protected from the flu? No. For healthy children and adults aged 5 to 49, there is a nasal vaccine called FluMist. Ask your health care provider for more details.

Are your children protected? If not, talk to your child's primary care provider about a flu shot today! Be sure to take care of yourself as well! If you have special health care problems, if you are pregnant or if you take care of or live with those at risk, including babies less than 6 months old, we urge you to get a flu shot too!

Where can my children get flu shots? Check with your health care provider, call the St. Louis Immunization's Regional Flu Hotline at 314.644-4FLU (4358) or visit any one of the following websites for flu clinic locations:

www.vnastl.com (Includes Family Flu Clinics for Parents, Infants & Children Age 6 Months & Over)

www.findaflushot.com (Contact individual clinics for age guidelines)

www.flucliniclocator.org (Contact individual clinics for age guidelines)

www.walgreens.com/flu (Contact individual clinics for age guidelines)

www.befithealth.com (Contact individual clinics for age guidelines)

How can I find out more information on the flu? For more information, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/flu or talk to your health care provider.