

Welcome to Bountiful Family Practice Updates:

Flu season is quickly approaching. Fortunately, the influenza vaccination has already arrived at our office. Unlike last year, the influenza vaccination contains both the typical influenza B, H3N2 as well as H1N1 (swine flu). This means only 1 vaccination is needed for most patients. There are exceptions to this rule which include children who may need more than one vaccination. Also, those with multiple medical illnesses may require a different vaccination.

There are 2 modes of delivery for the influenza vaccination a traditional shot or a nasal spray. There are advantage and disadvantages to each. Most all can receive the shot since it is an inactivated (killed virus). Fewer people are available to use the nasal-spray (FluMist) which is an attenuated (live virus which is weakened). You must be between the ages of 2-49, not be pregnant and not have respiratory illnesses such as asthma.

Questions patients usually ask:

1. Q: Why do I need to get the flu shot every year?

A: The influenza virus strains (types and subtypes) change every year. The strains chosen are based on the viruses seen around the world and predicted to affect the United States.

2. Q: Why do I get the flu every time I get a flu shot?

A: If you are given the influenza vaccination there can be some side effects including soreness around the injection site, redness and even swelling. In addition there may be fevers and body aches.

3. Q: Should everyone get the influenza vaccination?

A: No. Children younger than 6 months old. People who are allergic to chicken eggs should not receive the influenza vaccination. People who have had a severe reaction to the influenza vaccination. Ask your doctor and he will give you more specific information for yourself if there are any concerns.

4. Q: Can I get the influenza vaccination when I have a cold?

A: Yes, however this will depend on your symptoms. We do not typically give influenza vaccinations if someone has a high fever. Ask us if it is appropriate in your situation, we always try to err on the side of caution as to not complicate your illness.

5. Q: Is FluMist (Nasal-spray) different from the shot?

A: Yes, this vaccination contains a live attenuated (not as strong) virus. As a results people may experience more side effects including but not limited to runny nose, headache, muscle aches, fevers, sore throat, cough.

6. Q: Dr. Beckstead which vaccination do you get and which do you give your children?

A: Yes, I get the influenza shot every year and so does my family. Since we have a child under 6 months we do not want to exposure her to influenza. Therefore, we have made it a priority to get flu shots. As I tell my patients with scheduled vaccinations, I do not ask my patients to do anything I am not willing to do.

7. Q: How long does it take for the influenza vaccination to work?

A: It will take a minimum of 2 weeks for the vaccination to even start to work therefore it is best to get the vaccination as early in the season as possible.

At Bountiful Family Practice we care and are here for you. Please see us if you have any questions.

Dr. Beckstead