

Be informed

THE FLU AND THE FLU VACCINE

FLU FACTS

What is the flu?

Influenza is a respiratory infection that produces fever, chills, sore throat, muscle aches, and cough that lasts a week or more. The flu can be deadly for the elderly and those with compromised immune systems or who are suffering from diabetes, kidney dysfunction and heart disease. Each year about 20,000 Americans, mostly in these high risk groups, reportedly die from flu complications such as pneumonia.

What is the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is prepared from **the fluids of chick embryos** inoculated with a specific type(s) of influenza virus. The strains of flu virus in the vaccine are inactivated with **formaldehyde and preserved with Thimerosal, which is a mercury derivative.**

Every year, federal **health agency officials try to guess** which three flu strains are most likely to be prevalent in the U.S. the following year to determine which strains will be included in next year's flu vaccine.

If they guess right, the vaccine is thought to be 70 to 80 percent effective in temporarily preventing the flu of the season in healthy persons less than 65 years old. For those over 65 years old, the efficacy rate drops to 30 to 40% but the vaccine is thought to be 50 to 60% effective in preventing hospitalization and pneumonia and 80% effective in preventing death from the flu.

However, **sometimes health officials do not correctly predict which flu strains** will be most prevalent and the vaccine's effectiveness is much lower for that year.

Does the flu vaccine protect against all throat, respiratory, gastrointestinal and ear infections?

The flu vaccine only protects against the three specific viral strains which are included in any given year's flu vaccine. Throat, respiratory, gastrointestinal and ear infections caused by bacteria or **other kinds of viruses are not prevented by getting an annual flu shot.**

Are there reactions to the flu vaccine?

The most common reactions, which begin within 12 hours of vaccination and can last several days are: fever, fatigue, painful joints and headache. The most serious reaction that has been associated with flu vaccine is **Guillain-Barre Syndrome** (GBS) which occurs most often within two to four weeks of vaccination. GBS is an immune mediated nerve disorder characterized by muscle weakness, unsteady gait, numbness, tingling, pain and sometimes paralysis of one or more limbs or the face. **Recovery takes several months and can include residual disability.** Less than 5 percent of GBS cases end in death.

What are contraindications to the flu vaccine?

Among high risk factors listed by the CDC and the vaccine manufacturers are anyone who:

- (1) is sick with a fever;
- (2) has an impaired immune system; (Diseases like Rheumatoid Arthritis, lupus, CFS and allergies all show impaired immune system.
- (3) has an egg allergy;
- (4) has a mercury allergy; (Mercury is toxic to all people)
- (5) has a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome. (You don't need a history to get it!)

In years past, pregnancy was also a contraindication to flu vaccine but, today, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends flu vaccine for women more than 14 weeks pregnant.

Pregnant women should be aware that **the flu vaccine contains Thimerosal, which is a mercury derivative. Mercury is toxic to the brain** and has been found to be associated with brain damage and developmental delays in babies whose mothers were exposed to high levels of mercury during pregnancy.

(Mercury also accumulates in the body as it is a heavy metal and cannot be excreted easily, if at all. Little bits of it add up and equal damage to the brain and Nervous system.)

Information taken from the National Vaccine Information Center-Brackets and emphasis added by an RN.

What should I do? Become educated about the flu and its benefits and risks and the vaccine and its benefits and risks and make an

informed decision after consulting multiple sources of information and discussing your questions with one or more health professionals. (Note that although Medical People will assure you of its safety and laugh at those who claim there is danger. - NOT ONE of them would sign a legal paper guaranteeing it will not harm you or trigger illness.)

Here is one letter from a long list of letters on the web- reporting Guillian Barre Syndrome triggered by vaccines:

Registered: Apr 2001

Location: Canada

Posts: 13

Unfortunately, I have talked to many people since this vaccination thing came out and I haven't been able to get any REAL substantial answers. I wish I could offer you more, but my prayers go out to your mother, because this is such a hard thing to fight...re-occurrence is always lingering in the background.

My only advice is to become an advocate against receiving flu vaccines, because of the threat of GBS / CIDP that the doctors neglect to tell you when you receive the shot because the risks are unlikely... I'd like to see them tell that to someone who became sick with this disease from their damn shots.

Best of Luck...

Kristine

BEST way to prevent FLU-

General good health guidelines-

Cleanliness and regularity

Lots of rest

Lots of water (8-10 glasses a day)

Lots of fresh fruits and vegetable

Vitamin C in reasonable amounts

Avoid sugary foods

Avoid sugar/milk combinations (Good germ food!)

Dress well for weather, Keep warm

Avoid crowds during risk times.