

## News about the Flu Vaccine

It's really tough to stay on top of all the health news these days. We're here to help. Since the flu season is right around the corner, here's a snapshot of recent news stories about the flu vaccine.

**Flu shot helps people with diabetes.** The seasonal flu vaccine is now recommended for everyone 6 months and older.<sup>1</sup> But for some people it can be a matter of life and death.

During a seven-year study, British researchers looked at a group of nearly 125,000 people with type 2 diabetes—people who have a higher risk of cardiovascular problems.<sup>2</sup> In those with type 2 diabetes, the flu vaccine was linked with reductions in flu-season hospital admissions, including a:

- 30 percent reduction in admission for stroke
- 22 percent reduction in admissions for heart failure
- 19 percent reduction in admissions for heart attack
- 15 percent reduction in admissions for pneumonia or influenza

Among those who received a flu shot, the death rate was 24 percent lower than in those who had not been vaccinated. The study didn't prove a cause-and-effect connection between the two. But the results are pretty compelling.

**Limits of the flu vaccine "twofer."** How do infants benefit when their moms have a flu shot during pregnancy? Previous studies showed a benefit, for sure. Now we know how long it likely lasts. Researchers in South Africa assessed more than 1,000 infants whose moms received a flu shot while pregnant. During the first eight weeks after birth the vaccines were 85.6 percent effective.<sup>3</sup> After that, effectiveness ranged from about:

- 25 percent at eight to 16 weeks
- 30 percent at 16 to 24 weeks

It's helpful to know this because current vaccines don't work well in infants younger than six months, and infants have high rates of the flu. Talk to me about other ways you can protect your baby. That includes washing your hands often, keeping your

baby away from sick people, and making sure everyone else in your family is vaccinated.<sup>1</sup>

**Get your flu shot.** If you're like many people, getting a flu vaccination can easily slip your mind. But a flu shot is too important to get bumped to the bottom of your priority list. Every flu season is different, and every person responds to the flu in a different way. The flu can lead to hospitalizations and even death. The flu season often begins in October, so there's no better time than the present.

**Long-term protection.** More good news? Another study has found that flu vaccines offer moderate protection for about six months. That's the length of most flu seasons. The study's findings suggest that a flu shot in early fall may prevent the greatest number of cases.

Want to get a jump-start on that flu shot instead? Well, then, October is your month. Call your doctor or us for your flu shot options. We are ready if you need us. If you do catch the flu this season stop in for your flu needs and talk with our pharmacist about your symptoms. We are here to help.

*Nothing herein constitutes medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or is a substitute for professional advice. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other medical professional if you have questions or concerns about a medical condition.*

## Sources

1. What You Should Know for the 2015-2016 Influenza Season. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2015-2016.htm> Accessed 8-13-16.
2. Flu Shot Tied to Fewer Hospitalizations, Deaths in Type 2 Diabetes Patients. Available at: [https://medlineplus.gov/news/fullstory\\_160085.html](https://medlineplus.gov/news/fullstory_160085.html) Accessed 8-31-16.
3. Pregnancy Flu Shot Protects Newborn for 8 Weeks: Study. Available at: [https://medlineplus.gov/news/fullstory\\_159719.html](https://medlineplus.gov/news/fullstory_159719.html) Accessed 8-31-16.