

Flu, Your Child, and You

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: CDC - safer, healthier people.

It's that time of year again - flu season - a time that every parent dreads. The fever, the sore throat, watching helplessly while your child is miserable, having to miss work to take care of them; the list goes on and on. Flu can be very serious for children. Every year, about 20,000 children under age five are hospitalized due to the flu. Children in this age group are more likely to need to go to a doctor, urgent care center, or hospital because of the flu.

The first and most important step to take in fighting the flu is a yearly flu vaccination. The CDC recommends flu vaccination for all children from age 6 months through 18 years old. The flu vaccine protects against the three main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during flu season.

The flu vaccine can protect your child from getting sick from these three viruses or it can make their illness milder if they get a different flu virus. If your child has allergies related to chicken eggs, consult with their doctor before getting them a flu vaccine. Take time *now* to get your child vaccinated this flu season *before* flu hits *your* community.

You have a choice about what vaccine your child gets. The flu shot is approved for children six months and older, and the nasal spray flu vaccine is approved for healthy children ages two years and older. Children between the ages of six months and nine years who are getting their first flu vaccine will need two doses this season. The first dose helps your child's body recognize these viruses; the second dose gives them the immunity to fight them off. The second dose should be given at least 28 days after the first dose. If your child needs two doses this year, start early so your child will have a better chance to avoid the flu. The first year when your child will need two flu vaccines, it will take at least six weeks for the vaccine to take full effect. After the first year, when your child only needs one flu vaccine, it will take about two weeks for the vaccine to take full effect.

Children with chronic conditions, like asthma and diabetes, are at greater risk of developing serious flu complications, so it's especially important that these children get a flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available. Also, parents and other family members should get vaccinated, too. This can give you immunity as you interact with sick adults and children this season. And if you have a child under six months old, it's *very* important that people around your baby get vaccinated. This includes parents, grandparents, siblings, and the babysitter.

Remember, the flu can be prevented. So take action to keep your children healthy. Get them a flu vaccination.

Thank you for listening, and check in again soon for a new Flu Stop with CDC.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.