

# Top 10 things to remember about flu and the flu vaccine

## 1 THE CIRCLE OF PROTECTION

Make sure EVERYONE in your 'family circle' gets vaccinated against the flu each year — parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, caregivers and others. This helps create a circle of protection around your children, especially those vulnerable infants under 6 months old who cannot be vaccinated yet.

## 2 EVERYONE NEEDS A VACCINE!

Everyone over the age of six months — including kids with chronic health conditions — needs to get a flu vaccine every year.

## 3 FAMILY DOC KNOWS BEST

There are lots of places you could go to get a flu shot, but your primary care provider is best — especially for your kids.

## 4 WHY SO SERIOUS?

Flu seasons are unpredictable, with flu deaths over the last 40 years ranging from 3,000 to nearly 60,000 per year, according to the US CDC\*. In Cincinnati, we see 80–100 kids hospitalized with complications from the flu every flu season, many of whom are otherwise healthy. We just do not want to see even one more child in the ICU with a condition easily prevented by getting a flu vaccine.

*\* United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## 5 CHANGE HAPPENS

Influenza (flu) viruses constantly change. Each season, viruses spread and can affect people differently. That's why, each year, a new flu vaccine is developed — to fight the most recent version of flu viruses.

## 6 THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT

Back-to-school wellness checks are a great time to get your child vaccinated. Flu vaccines are usually available in late summer and early fall. As soon as your family doctor has the vaccine in stock, it's a good idea to get the vaccine as early as possible, especially if you have family members in high-risk groups. And don't worry — even if your family gets vaccinated in early August, you're all still protected throughout the flu season.

## 7 BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

While flu outbreaks can happen as early as October (making August and September ideal times to get flu vaccines), flu activity usually peaks in or after January. Getting the vaccine in the winter will still provide protection.

## 8 CHOICES, CHOICES, CHOICES

There are different kinds of vaccine and two options for children. The nose-spray vaccine (sometimes called LAIV for live-attenuated-influenza-vaccine) is made from live but weak flu viruses. It's approved for healthy children over the age of 2 and adults under age 49 who are not pregnant. This may be a better option for your younger children. Anyone 6 months or older — even those with chronic health issues — can get the flu 'shot,' which is made of inactivated or 'killed' flu virus. Ask your primary care provider for details.

## 9 YOUR HANDS HOLD THE KEY

Refrain from touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially during flu season. You can get the flu by touching surfaces like door knobs, money or elevator buttons, then touching your face. Wash or sanitize your hands frequently, and as much as possible, try to keep your kids away from people who are ill.



## 10 GROSS BUT TRUE

Germs in a cough or sneeze can travel 3 to 6 feet through the air, settle on objects and remain contagious for several hours! Be sure to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze — and use your upper arm or inner elbow instead of your hand to cover them.