



Sutter VNA & Hospice

A Sutter Health Affiliate

Flu Facts – 2004-2005

- What is the flu?** The flu is a highly contagious viral infection of the nose, throat and lungs. It ranks as one of the most severe illnesses of the winter season.
- How is it spread?** The flu virus is airborne and can easily spread from person to person when the infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can also be transmitted by direct hand contact.
- What are the symptoms?** The typical flu illness brings an abrupt onset of fever, chills, a dry cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat and muscle and joint pain. The flu virus can also cause extreme fatigue that last for several days or weeks.
- Is the flu serious?** The flu can lead to hospitalization or even death, especially among the elderly. 500,000 people end up in hospital emergency rooms each year from the flu or flu complications. 10,000 Americans die annually from flu- related illnesses. Even without complications, the flu can make you miserable and mean many days away from work or other responsibilities.
- Is the flu vaccine safe?** You cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine. The flu shot is very safe and generally has few side effects. There may be some soreness, redness or swelling where the shot is given.
- Who should get the flu vaccine?** People aged 50 or older.
Residents of nursing homes or other chronic care facilities.
Adults and children with chronic diseases.
All healthcare workers.
Healthy individuals who want to protect themselves against the flu.
Pregnant women should check with their physician first.
- Who should not get a flu shot?** Women who are in their first trimester of pregnancy.
People who are allergic to eggs or chicken feathers.
People who are ill or have a fever at the time they wish to receive a flu shot.
People who have had a previous severe reaction to a flu shot (very rare).
People who have had Gullian Barre Syndrome.
People allergic to Thimerasol (contact lens solution)

You need to have a new flu shot every year.

For information about flu shot clinics call 1-800-500-2400.