

Subject: FLU YET AGAIN!!

Colleagues

We continue to see cases of FLU in our patients and in the healthcare workforce. And we are not yet into the peak season. The southeast US has been identified as having an elevated incidence compared to the rest of the nation. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/> . So we can expect to see more cases over the next few months.

As caregivers we have a special obligation to get immunized and to not put our patients at risk by coming to work ill.

SO DO THE RIGHT THING AND GET A FLU SHOT!

Dr Iovine prepared the following for those who for some unfathomable reason might be concerned about getting a flu shot.

Flu Questions and Answers

Q1: How do I know if I might be coming down with the flu?

A1: The signs and symptoms of influenza are characterized by the sudden onset of:

- * Fever (although not all persons develop fever)
- * General feeling of illness
- * Headache
- * Dry cough
- * Sore throat
- * Runny nose

Q2: How does influenza spread?

A2: Influenza viruses are spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes near a susceptible person. Contact with contaminated surfaces is another possible source of transmission.

Q3: If I am exposed, how long might it take for me to become sick?

A3: The typical incubation period for influenza is 1-4 days, but on average is it 2 days from the time of exposure.

Q4: Even if get the flu, won't I just get better quickly?

A4: Not necessarily. Influenza can be serious and anyone can become sick with flu and experience serious complications. Even if you bounce back quickly, others around you might not be so lucky. Older people, young children, pregnant women and people with medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease and lung disease are at especially high risk from the flu. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, you can still spread the virus to others. Don't be the one spreading flu to those you care about.

Q5: For how long am I infectious to other people?

A5: A person who is infected with influenza actually spread virus for about 24 hours even before symptoms start. That means you are infectious before you even know you are getting sick. This fact stresses the importance of vaccination to avoid getting sick in the first place.

Healthy adults can shed virus for up to 10 days after symptoms start, but shedding usually decreases rapidly by 3 - 5 days after symptom onset.

Q6: Is the flu shot safe?

A6: Yes. The flu vaccine is safe. It's been given to hundreds of millions of people for more than 50 years and has a very good safety track record.

Q7: Once when I got a flu shot, it gave me the flu. Why should I get a flu shot again?

A7. The flu vaccine contains killed flu viruses, so it is impossible to get the flu from it. When people do feel symptoms after the flu shot, it is due to one of two reasons:

1. Just by coincidence, the person was already infected with a virus (maybe even influenza) when receiving the shot, so would have gotten sick regardless.
2. The person is having a strong (and appropriate!) immune response to the killed viruses, which can manifest as arm soreness, achiness and mild malaise. These side effects are not the flu. If they occur at all, they will last only 1-2 days.

PLEASE

Get immunized and if you are sick with flu symptoms do not come to work and put our patients at risk.

Thanks

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