

Century-Airport Pediatrics
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INFLUENZA 2016-2017

- Influenza, also known as 'the flu', is caused by a virus, which causes symptoms such as fever, chills, muscle aches, cough and/or sore throat. In Buffalo, it can be present from December through March.
- Influenza can be life threatening. Most people who die are older than 65, but **many of those who are hospitalized are younger than 2**. Children hospitalized because of influenza usually have high fever, wheezing, croup or pneumonia. Because influenza is a virus, it **cannot** be treated with antibiotics.
- We do have vaccines available that protect against certain strains of this disease. The vaccine will only help protect against the influenza virus and not the many other winter viruses. The vaccine significantly protects against last years and this years strains of the flu virus.
- The flu vaccine is now recommended for all children and adults, but is **very strongly recommended** for children with long term health problems including:
 - Heart Disease
 - Asthma/Recurrent Airway Disease
 - Metabolic Diseases
 - Diagnosis of a weakened immune system
 - Lung, Kidney or Liver Disorders
 - Severe CP or Seizure Disorders
 - Anemia/Blood Disorders
 - Neuromuscular Disorders
- The flu vaccine is also **highly recommended** to all children **6 months through their 5th birthday to reduce the spread of disease** in homes and communities.

In the past, 2 different influenza vaccines have been available (nasal flumist and the 'flu shot'). This year however, the only available option will be the 'flu shot'.

- The 'inactivated' vaccine (injection), is made by growing the influenza virus in eggs, purifying them, then inactivating them with the chemical formaldehyde. This vaccine is given as a shot and can possibly cause muscle aches and low-grade fever. If your child has been diagnosed with Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder, then they may be eligible for the thimerasol-free vaccine. All children 6 months to 3 years receive a thimerasol-free type of the vaccine.

Contraindications to receiving the vaccines include having a severe allergy to eggs, having had a serious reaction to influenza vaccine in the past, a history of Guillian-Barre Syndrome, children less than 6 months of age and/or having a fever on the day of vaccine administration.

Children less than 9 years of age, who have never received an influenza vaccine, require two doses for best protection against getting the influenza virus.