

Century-Airport Pediatrics

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INFLUENZA 2017-2018

- 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 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 thimerosal-free vaccine. All children 6 months to 3 years receive a thimerosal-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.