

Century-Airport Pediatrics
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INFLUENZA 2018-2019

- 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, most commonly influenza is present December-April.
- 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/Reactive 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 nasal flu vaccine has been deemed to be less effective than the shot but can be given on a case by case basis for children **3 years or older**.

- 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.

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 Gillian-Barre Syndrome
- Children less than **6 months** of age. (We encourage all caretakers and household contacts to be vaccinated).
- 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, 1 month apart, for best protection against getting the influenza virus.