

WHY WE FEEL YOUR CHILD SHOULD GET A FLU VACCINATION

This is the first season that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have recommended flu vaccination for all children ages 6 months and older. We strongly agree with this recommendation. Some of you with healthy, older school-age children may not have had them vaccinated for the flu previously. Please read through the following points and make an educated decision.

1) The most important reason to vaccinate your child against the flu is to prevent the rare cases of death. Each year in this country flu causes 50-100 pediatric deaths. The majority of these children are otherwise completely healthy kids just like yours. The flu virus can attack the heart, brain, lungs and kidneys causing these organs to fail. In addition, thousands of children are hospitalized with serious complications related to the flu. The vaccine is nearly 100% effective at preventing death and the serious complications that lead to hospitalization.

2) Even an uncomplicated course of influenza will make your child feel miserable and keep them out of school for *at least* a week. The flu causes a nasty cough that can linger for 2-3 weeks. Consider how this could affect your child's schoolwork and athletic participation. Who will stay home with your child when they are ill? Can you afford that much time off work?

3) If your child contracts the flu they can easily spread it to family members and friends. Does your child visit elderly grandparents? How would you feel if that grandparent got the flu from your child? Yes, the elderly do receive flu vaccination, but because their immune systems don't respond very well to the vaccine they are left vulnerable to getting infected. Does your child babysit or visit with young children? Children under the age of 5 years are much more likely to develop serious complications from the flu. You wouldn't want your child infecting a young child who might get very ill.

4) Do you have any special vacation plans between November and April? If one or more of your children comes down with the flu right before your vacation how would that affect your plans?

5) The flu vaccine is completely safe. The nasal vaccine can cause a little nasal stuffiness for 1-3 days. The injectable vaccine can cause a little soreness at the site of the vaccination. Each year our practice gives over 4000 doses of flu vaccine and we have seen NO complications. All the doctors at CRPA and their children get vaccinated against the flu every year.

Helpful websites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm>

<http://www.familiesfightingflu.org/>

<http://www.chop.edu/export/download/pdfs/articles/vaccine-education->

[center/influenza.pdf](#)