



You, Your Child, Asthma and

THE FLU

Do you have asthma? Does your child? The flu is more dangerous for anyone who has asthma.

Why?

- ▶ People with asthma have swollen and sensitive airways. The flu can further inflame the airways and lungs. It can even lead to pneumonia or other infections.
- ▶ The flu can be more serious for people with asthma. This is true even if their asthma is mild or well controlled by medication.
- ▶ The flu can trigger asthma attacks and make asthma symptoms worse.

To protect themselves, people with asthma need to get a flu shot.

Is the flu a serious disease?

Yes. The flu is a virus that can cause some or all of the following symptoms; fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and/or fatigue. Unlike the common cold, the flu comes on suddenly, makes you very sick for a week or longer, and it can send you to the hospital and even cause death.

When a sick person coughs or sneezes, tiny droplets fly through the air. You can get sick from the droplets if they land in your eyes, nose, or mouth. You can also get the flu by touching a surface like a table or a doorknob that has flu virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

You can get the flu from others even when they don't feel sick. Staying away from people who look sick is not enough to protect you.

Each year in the United States, nearly 24,000 people die from the flu.

Why should I or my child get the flu shot?

- ▶ To save your life or your child's life. People who have asthma have a higher risk of death or serious illness from the flu than most people.
- ▶ To save time and money. You or your child will miss fewer days of work or school due to sickness.

The flu vaccine is quick, easy and safe protection.▶

Can the flu shot give me or my child the flu?

No. This is not possible, because the shot is made with only inactivated, or “killed” flu virus.

Is the flu shot safe?

Yes. The flu shot is very safe; its benefits far outweigh any possible side effects. Some people may have redness and soreness where they received the shot, but other side effects are rare.

Should I and my child get a flu shot every year?

Yes. The flu virus constantly changes, so the flu shot must change too. People who have asthma should be among the first to get a flu shot as soon as the vaccine is available.

Should my family and friends get a flu shot, too?

Yes. Everyone can get the flu. When the people around you get a flu shot they not only protect themselves, they are less likely to spread the flu to you. The flu shot is recommended for everyone six months and older, including pregnant women and people with certain chronic health conditions.

Should I get a pneumococcal shot?

Yes. People with asthma are at a higher risk for the flu and for pneumococcal infection. Pneumococcal infection is a serious complication of the flu and it can be life threatening. Unlike the flu shot, the pneumococcal shot is available all year.

How do I get the flu and pneumococcal shots?

Talk to your doctor or health care provider, or contact your local health department.

For more information about the flu shot, visit: www.health.ny.gov/flu

Or, visit the New York State Department of Health’s flu clinic locator during flu season.



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of Health