

## Influenza or “the flu” Information

Influenza or “the flu” can be a serious infection that is caused by a virus. It is an infection that can be prevented easily or at least made less severe by having a flu vaccination. The best time to get a flu vaccination is during October or November. However, getting a flu shot later will still protect you from the flu.

The flu spreads easily from person to person. The infection can be mild, but it also can cause severe illness and even death. Certain people are at greater risk for serious illness if they get the flu. This includes older persons, young children and pregnant women; people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, asthma or heart disease; and people who live in facilities like nursing homes.

All persons aged 6 months and older should get a flu vaccination. This includes persons with egg allergies. For most people with egg allergies, the benefits of getting a flu vaccination outweigh the risks of getting the flu. If you are allergic to eggs, please tell your health care provider so that special precautions can be made.

The flu vaccine is safe and it works. While it is not 100% effective in preventing the flu, if you get the shot and still get the flu, it is usually far less serious than if you did not get the shot. Sometimes there are side effects from the shot that may be mistaken as the flu, such as a sore arm, body aches or a slight fever.

In addition to getting the flu shot, there are other things you can do to avoid getting or spreading the flu:

Wash your hands often

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Stay home when you are sick if possible; and

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

For information about the dates, times and locations of walk-in Flu Vaccination Clinics, please call the hotline at 503-808-1923, or Outside Portland 1-800-949-1004, ext. 51923, and then the number for your clinic.