



## Preventing flu and pneumonia in children under 18

Pneumonia is a common complication of influenza (flu). Your child's health care provider may recommend a flu shot. Getting a flu shot every fall can be good prevention for pneumonia.

In the United States, influenza epidemics occur during the winter months, generally December through April, and are responsible for approximately 20,000 deaths each year. Often, pneumonia is the final illness in people who have other serious, chronic diseases. It's the sixth most common cause of death overall, and the most common fatal infection acquired in hospitals.

### What Can You Do to Prevent Your Child from Getting the Flu?

The flu virus is a highly contagious viral respiratory tract infection. It is spread by airborne transmission, meaning **sneezing and coughing** into the air or on other people. Reduce your child's risk by:

- ☒ **Avoiding contact with infected people.**
- ☒ **Frequently washing your hands and your child's hands**

The best way to prevent flu is to receive a flu vaccine. The best time to get a flu shot is from early October to mid-November. The flu shot can be given at any point during the flu season, even if the virus has already begun to spread in your community. **If you decide your child needs a flu shot, it must be repeated yearly. The virus is constantly changing and new vaccines are developed annually to protect against new strains of the flu.**

### *Prevention: FLU SHOTS for children under age 18*

- <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2021e.htm>  
for more flu information
- <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/news/2005/NEW01285.html>  
for information about the product Tamiflu in children under 12
- [http://www.nfid.org/influenza/consumers\\_factsheet.html](http://www.nfid.org/influenza/consumers_factsheet.html)  
fact sheet about flu virus
- <http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/influenza.asp>  
Center for Health Care in Schools
- <http://www.cfah.org/hbns/getDocument.cfm?documentID=1211>  
Center for Advancement of Health and another view of flu immunization for children

**A vaccine** is also available to help fight pneumococcal pneumonia, a type of bacterial pneumonia. Your child's doctor can help you decide if it is necessary. It is usually given only to people at high risk of getting the disease and its life-threatening complications. [http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/public/imm\\_cd58.html](http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/public/imm_cd58.html) • Health and Wellness web site gives information about this disease and vaccinations. For more information, visit: <http://www.lungusa.org/diseases/index.html>

## Flu shots are **RECOMMENDED** if you fit into one of these categories:

- ☒ **People 50 years or older.** These people should also get the pneumonia vaccine. Unlike the flu shot, this is a once in a lifetime shot and can be given at the same time as a flu shot.
- ☒ **Residents of nursing homes, group living arrangements and other long term care facilities.**
- ☒ **Adults and children with chronic heart or lung disease, including asthma.**
- ☒ **Children and teenagers age 6 months to 18 years who are on long-term aspirin treatment.** They could get a serious disease called Reye Syndrome if they catch the flu while taking aspirin.
- ☒ **Adults and children who needed regular medical treatment or who were in the hospital during the past year because of chronic illness.**
- ☒ **People infected with HIV.**
- ☒ **Personnel who care for individuals in group living situations.**

**Remember to consult your child's primary care provider  
and follow the recommendations provided!**