

## Four Good Reasons to get a Flu Shot

- 1) Reduced risk of getting the flu. The flu vaccine was 40% effective overall last year, with variation among age groups. For those 6 months to 8 years it was 53% effective, while for those 65 years and older it was only 20% effective. Two flu vaccines are available only to those 65 years and older, designed to address the limited effectiveness of vaccines in older adults due to weaker immune systems.
- 2) Decreased severity/symptoms for those who do get sick with the flu. Studies show that receiving the flu shot reduces the risk of being admitted to the hospital by over 30%. A recent CDC study found that patients hospitalized with the flu who had not received the flu vaccine that year, were 2 to 5 times more likely to die than someone who had been vaccinated.
- 3) Limits transmission to others. You can transmit the virus up to a day before symptoms begin and 3-4 days after they start. Vaccinated individuals therefore protect vulnerable people such as those with immune conditions and severe allergies who cannot get vaccinated as well as babies and older individuals where the vaccine may not be as effective.
- 4) Minimizes the impact of inflammation. The flu can make chronic health conditions such as heart disease, COPD and diabetes worse. An often under recognized danger of influenza is the resulting inflammatory reaction that may last several weeks after an acute case of the flu, which may trigger a heart attack or stroke. A recent study noted that acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) is 6x's more likely within 7 days of laboratory confirmed flu.[i]

[i] <http://www.nfid.org/idinfo/influenza/cta-dangers-of-influenza-in-adults-with-chronic-health-c.pdf>