

November's Topic: Flu Vaccination

By: Susana Mixson, Sara Ransom, and June Twigg
Pharm.D. candidates



HEALTHCARE CLINIC HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Phone: (334) 263-8470

Fax: (334) 263-8670

Email: hcc@alseib.org

PHARMACY HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Phone: (334) 263-8460

Fax: (334) 263-8660

Email: rx@alseib.org

Flu Season is Here!

Influenza, otherwise known as the flu, is a respiratory illness caused by different strains of the flu virus. Influenza occurs every year during the winter season. Each year about 5-20% of the population gets the flu and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized for flu complications. Because the flu can cause serious illness, vaccination is the best method for prevention against the influenza virus. Since the influenza viruses change their composition each year, annual vaccination is important.

For the 2014-2015 season, the trivalent influenza vaccine protects against three different viruses (A/California/7/2009 H1N1-like virus, A/Texas/50/2012 H3N2-like virus, and B/Massachusetts/2/2012-like virus). The quadravalent vaccine protects against an additional virus (B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus) plus the three viruses found in the trivalent vaccine.

Who should be vaccinated?

- CDC recommends yearly vaccination for everyone 6 months of age and older

When should you be vaccinated?

- CDC recommends vaccination with the flu vaccine when it becomes available, preferably by October.
 - **Remember:** It takes two weeks after vaccination for the antibodies to form and provide full protection against the flu!
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Questions your healthcare provider will ask before giving an influenza vaccine.

1. Are you sick and/or running a fever today?
2. Are you allergic to latex or eggs?
3. Are you allergic to Thiomersal (mercury-based preservative used in some vaccines)?
4. Are you currently taking medications that suppress your immune system?

Flu Facts

1. Each qualifying person should receive the influenza vaccine every year.
2. Influenza vaccine side effects may include injection site redness, soreness, swelling, or low-grade fever, headache, and possibly muscle aches.

Types of Influenza Vaccines

1. Inactivated (killed influenza virus) influenza vaccine, protects against 3 influenza strains, injected into the muscle of upper arm or into the thick layer of tissue located just under the skin
2. Cell culture-based (vaccine made in mammalian cells), inactivated influenza vaccine, protects against 3 influenza strains, injected into muscle of upper arm
3. High dose, inactivated influenza vaccine, protects against 3 influenza strains, injected into muscle of upper arm
4. Inactive fragments of influenza virus (recombinant), protects against 3 influenza strains, injected into muscle of upper arm
5. Live but weakened influenza virus, protects against 4 influenza strains, given as a spray into nostrils of nose
6. Inactivated influenza vaccine, protects against 4 influenza strains, injected into muscle of upper arm

What influenza vaccines does the SEIB Wellness Clinic offer?

- **Flucelvax** – Cell culture-based, inactivated influenza vaccine, protects against 3 influenza strains, injected into muscle of upper arm
 - Safe for patients with an egg allergy
- **Fluvirin** – Inactivated influenza vaccine, protects against 3 strains, injected into muscle of upper arm

What can you do to prevent the flu?

The influenza virus is contagious and spreads from person to person or by touching an object that has come in contact with someone infected with the flu. Infected individuals are contagious starting one day before symptoms occur until 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

Important steps to avoid the flu include:

- VACCINATION!
- Avoid close contact with others who are sick
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Flu Vaccine Fact or Fiction

- **I am protected against the flu the same day I get the vaccine.**
FICTION. The flu vaccine works by enhancing your body's natural defenses against the virus. The body needs about two weeks to fully respond to the flu vaccine, so people exposed to the flu virus in those two weeks may develop symptoms.
- **The flu vaccine can give me the flu.**
FICTION. The flu vaccine contains small pieces of the influenza virus, but does not contain any whole virus particles. This means that the vaccine cannot cause an infection. Nasal vaccines contain a very weakened form of the influenza virus that cannot survive in the body, and so it cannot cause infection.
- **I need to get the flu vaccine every year as soon as it becomes available.**
FACT. The most active strains of influenza virus change from year to year. The CDC keeps track of these changes to ensure that the vaccine will cover the most active flu strains. It is recommended that you receive the vaccine as soon as it is available.
- **It's better to get the flu than the flu vaccine.**
FICTION. The flu can be a very dangerous illness, especially in children, older adults, and people with certain chronic diseases. The flu can result in hospitalization and even death. The flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and those around you from this dangerous illness.

References

1. Misconceptions about seasonal flu and flu vaccines. CDC. 9 Sep 2014. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/misconceptions.htm>
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3. Influenza Vaccines – United States, 2014-15. CDC. 17 Sept 2014. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/vaccines.htm>
4. Preventing Seasonal Flu Illness. CDC. 1 Aug 2014. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/preventing.htm>



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Please let us know how we are doing by filling out a survey at the following link:

https://auburn.qualtrics.com/S/E/?SID=SV_3DXRxyUp8KC7Lzn

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(334) 263-8470

State Wellness Center 101 S. Union Street Montgomery, AL 36104

All active employees, covered spouses of active employees, non-Medicare retirees and covered non-Medicare spouses of retirees that use the State Employees' Health Insurance Plan (Group 13000) as their primary insurance plan are eligible for a wellness premium discount. Each wellness plan year is November 1 through October 31.

SEIB and Local Government employees along with SEIB retirees are able to use the State Wellness Center Pharmacy. The pharmacy offers various over the counter products at discounted prices and a **free medication delivery service**. Delivery can be provided to the patients located in Montgomery. Please designate which site you would like your medication delivered to, and if it is to your residence someone must be available at the home to receive the delivery.

State Wellness Center Healthcare Clinic

The SEIB clinic has a quality healthcare **TEAM** that includes nurse practitioners, an ambulatory care pharmacist, a physician, and nurses who work closely together to take care of your health and wellness needs.

Services Include:

- Treat minor illnesses
- Provide health education & monitoring
- Check health progress between appointments
- Share information with your physician
- Monitor efficacy & safety of every medication
- Evaluate out of pocket medication expense
- Smoking cessation & weight loss services
- Diabetes education program
- Immunizations & injectable medications
- Develop a personalized medication plan
- Monitor control of chronic illnesses
- Medication check-ups
- Medication therapy management