

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

Andrew C. Engler, M.D.

290 Baldwin Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401

(650) 343-4597 FAX (650) 343-3402

Newsletter

www.theallergyclinic.com October 2021



Why You Should Still Get A Flu Vaccine

As we noted on last month's newsletter, the COVID-19 pandemic and related preventative measures (masking, social distancing, school closure and reduced traveling), resulted in a decrease in the incidence of flu infections in 2020. Health agencies are hopeful that this will continue to be the case, but one of the many things we have learned about the pandemic is the need to be diligent about keeping up with proven health practices and following recommended health guidelines. With that said, several health agencies, including the CDC, recommend getting the flu vaccine to reduce the chance of contracting the flu.

Influenza (flu) is a potentially serious infection and although every flu season is different, it is estimated that millions of people get the flu every year. The severity of symptoms associated with the flu can vary and for those with underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma or auto-immune disorders, the flu can lead to a number of medical complications.

When should I get vaccinated?

We recommend that most patients get the flu vaccine sometime during the months of September and October, as it is possible that the benefits of the vaccine may wear off before the flu season starts if the vaccine is administered too early.

However, special considerations should be made in certain populations, especially in children (as some children need 2 doses) or those who are pregnant. It is also important to keep in mind that it takes a couple of weeks for the antibodies to develop in our system so getting the flu shot too late in the season may not be as effective.

As we have seen with COVID and the Delta variant, it is still possible to develop COVID, despite being vaccinated. However, similar to the COVID vaccine, studies have shown that patients who were vaccinated against the flu, but still contracted the flu, had less severe illness. In fact, one study noted in the CDC website showed that "among adults, flu vaccination was associated with a 26% lower risk of ICU admission and a 31% lower risk of death from flu compared to those who were unvaccinated".

Potential Side Effects

Contrary to what many people believe, one cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine. Nevertheless, there are potential side effects, including soreness, redness, and/or swelling at the injection site, headache (low grade), fever, muscle aches, nausea and fatigue. These symptoms are generally mild and short-lived and many feel that the potential benefits of the vaccine, outweigh these side effects. According to the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology, "studies have shown that even individuals with confirmed egg allergy can safely receive the flu vaccine" The Joint Task Force on Practice Parameters of the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology and the American College of Allergy Asthma and Immunology, as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics also state that "no special precautions are required for the administration of influenza vaccine to egg-allergic patients no matter how severe the egg allergy".

This upcoming cold/flu season may be different from previous years with COVID still looming around us, but one thing is certain, maintaining your respiratory health is crucial in helping you stay healthy. Make sure that you stay on all medications as prescribed and if you are on them, get your allergy shots as scheduled.