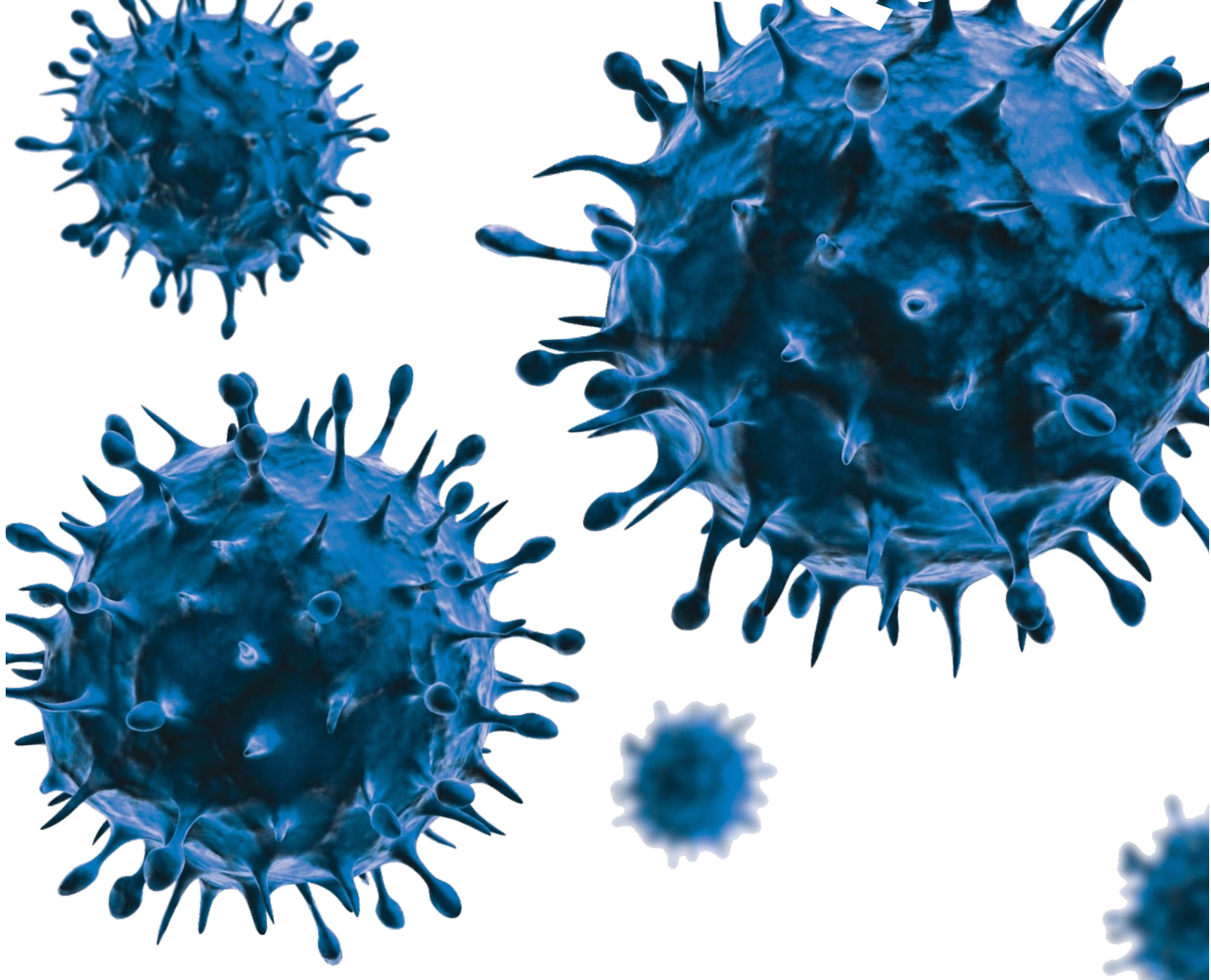


WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

FLU/0.



FLU 101+

By Pam Graber
Education and Information Officer
Nevada State Health Division

DEFINITION

The “flu,” short for “influenza,” is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses, which are submicroscopic infective organisms. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times it can lead to death. In the U.S., it is a common respiratory illness during the winter.

SYMPTOMS

Your respiratory illness may be the flu if you have fever and chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches, muscle and/or body aches and fatigue. Some people, most often children, may experience vomiting and diarrhea. You can have the flu without having a fever.

DO I HAVE THE FLU?

Flu is responsible for most of the respiratory illness during flu season. However, other viruses can cause respiratory illnesses similar to the flu. Thus, it is impossible to know if you have the flu based on symptoms alone. If your doctor needs to know for sure if you have the flu, laboratory tests must be done.

DURATION

Most people recover from the flu in a few days to less than two weeks, but when complications like pneumonia, bronchitis or sinus and ear infections occur, it can take much longer to feel well.

FLU CONTAGIOUSNESS

You may be able to pass the flu to others while you feel well and while you feel sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning a day before they feel flu symptoms until as many as five to seven days after becoming sick. Children or people with weakened immune systems might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

HOW FLU SPREADS

Most experts believe the flu is spread mainly via airborne droplets made when someone with the flu talks, coughs or sneezes. The

droplets from their breath make it to the mouths or noses of people nearby. Less frequently, a person could get the flu from touching a surface with flu droplets/viruses on it, and subsequently touch their own mouth, eyes or nose.

FLU SEASON

Winter is the time of flu season, but the exact timing and duration of flu season varies. Outbreaks can occur as early as October or as late as April. Historically, in the northern hemisphere, February is usually the peak month for flu activity. However, you can get the flu at any time of the year.

SEASONAL FLU

Seasonal flu refers to the strain of flu most prevalent in any given year. Strains can vary from year to year, or they can remain the same. Annual research directs the experts to identify the strain likely to be most common each year, and the flu vaccine is then updated to match. The two main types of influenza virus, A and B, and their sub-types are responsible for seasonal flu epidemics each year.

THE FLU VS. COLDS

The flu is a more serious illness than a cold.

They are both common and caused by viruses, and their symptoms are similar.

However, with

the flu, symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness and dry cough are more common and intense. Also, colds do not result in serious health conditions such as pneumonia, bacterial infections or hospitalizations.

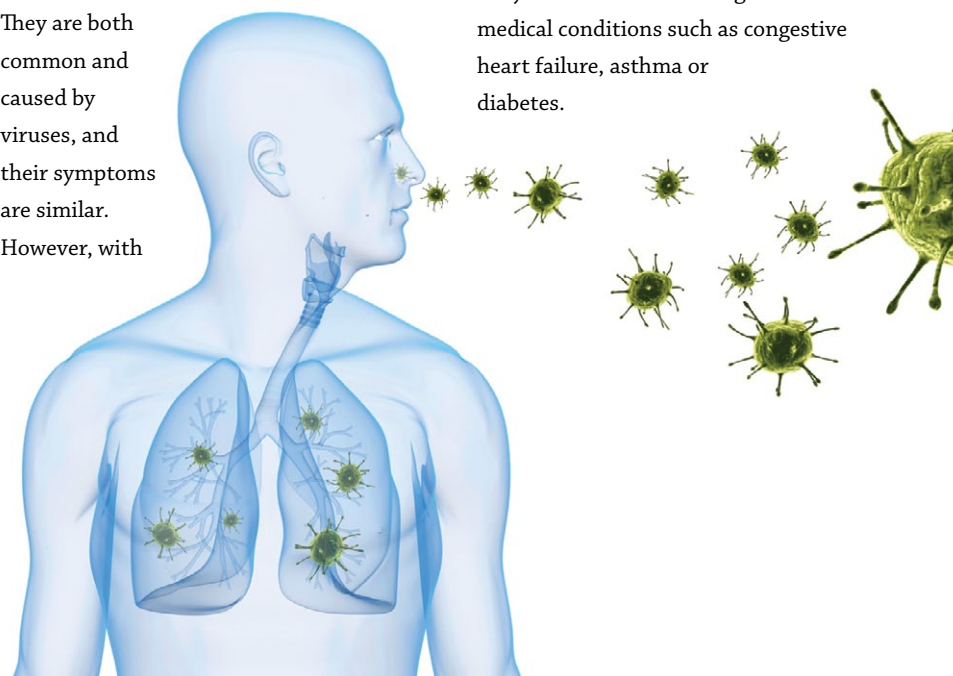
HOW SERIOUS IS THE FLU?

There is no simple answer to this question. The effects of the flu can range from a few days of discomfort to hospitalization or even death. The severity of the flu in any given year can vary depending on which strain of the flu is circulating; how much of and when the flu vaccine becomes available; how many people get vaccinated; and how well matched the flu vaccine is to the flu viruses causing the illness.

Other factors that can impact the seriousness of the flu concern individual characteristics such as your age, whether you are pregnant or the presence of underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease. Also, persons who live in facilities such as nursing homes suffer a higher level of vulnerability.

COMPLICATIONS OF FLU

Complications of the flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration and worsening of chronic medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma or diabetes.



Flu Facts

According to recent studies, each year in the United States flu causes:

- 31.4 million doctor visits
- \$10.4 billion in medical costs
- \$16.3 billion in lost wages
- 3.1 million hospitalization days and thousands of deaths

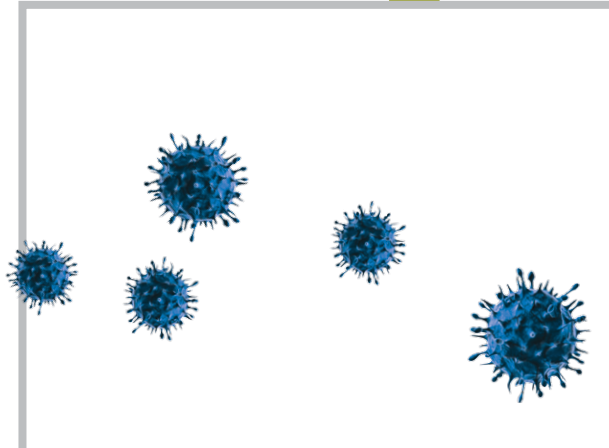
Everyone is at risk of contracting the flu. Certain individuals are at higher risk of complications from the flu:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old. Flu associated deaths are highest in children younger than 6 months of age.
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- American Indians and Alaskan Natives
- People who have medical conditions including asthma, neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions, chronic lung disease, heart disease, blood disorders, endocrine disorders, kidney disorders, liver disorders, metabolic disorders, weakened immune system due to disease or medication, people younger than 19 years of age who receive long-term aspirin therapy, and people who are morbidly obese.

The Spread



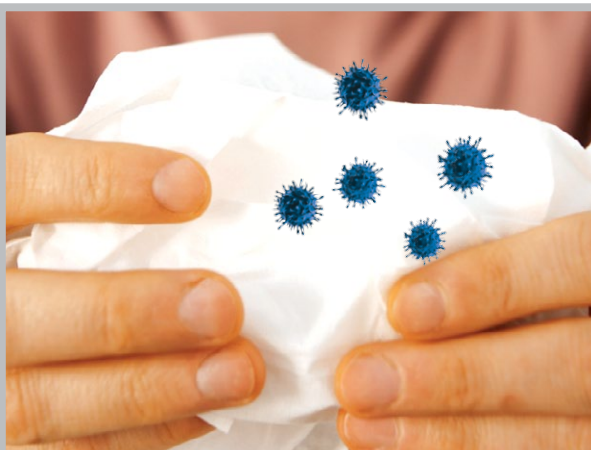
Just one sick person, who can be contagious an entire day before showing symptoms and stay contagious up to seven days, can introduce the flu virus to an entire community.



The flu virus spreads through respiratory droplets containing the virus when the sick person coughs, sneezes or talks.



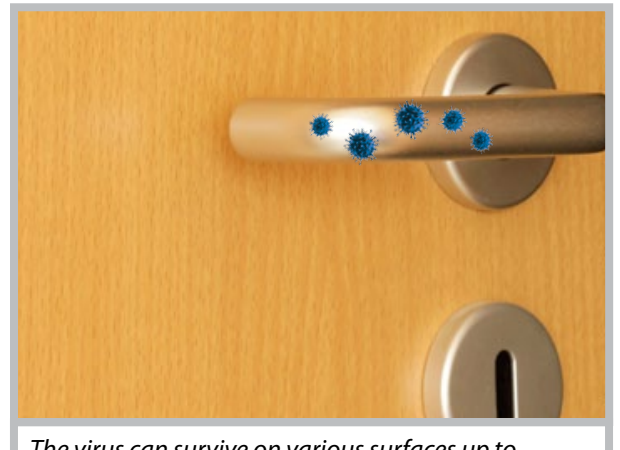
Stand back! Droplets containing the flu virus travel up to a few feet through the air and land in the mouth or nose of healthy coworkers, family members, friends or that stranger on the elevator.



Respiratory droplets containing the flu virus can end up on the sick person's hands simply by touching their eyes, nose or mouth or by using improper coughing techniques.



Droplets transfer from the sick person's hands to a variety of surfaces like doorknobs, telephones, remote controls, hand rails, computer keyboards, coffee machines, elevator buttons and much more.



The virus can survive on various surfaces up to several days and end up on the hands of everyone who touches the object after the sick person! If hands are not properly washed immediately, they inevitably touch the face and infect with the flu.



"With so many ways to contract the flu virus, I'm sure glad I got vaccinated!"

11 Year Old Dies from Flu Complications

By Anna Barela

Before her young life was snatched by complications from the flu, Kyra was extremely outgoing and kind. She loved theater and acting and cared for homeless animals. She was very close to her grandmother, longtime Carson City resident Norma Conway.

Norma never thought her healthy, 11-year-old granddaughter Kyra needed a flu shot. She shared so much with Kyra, who took after Norma in her passion for acting, singing and dancing. Kyra was adventurous and enjoyed going out for sushi. She loved animals, petitioning to work as a volunteer at the local animal shelter even though she was not technically old enough. She reached out to others and brought people together.

"She was very well liked," Norma recalled. "She was the kind of little girl who could bridge the gap between ages and nationalities. She was always the protector. She was just an outstanding little girl."

"She was the kind of little girl who could bridge the gap between ages and nationalities. ... She was just an outstanding little girl."

Kyra, her older brother and her mother, Danielle, had moved in with Norma after Danielle was diagnosed with stage four colon cancer. A breast cancer survivor herself, Norma retired from the State of Nevada to care for Danielle. Kyra helped care for her mother.

When Kyra got sick, Norma didn't even know she had the flu. After a family trip to Disneyland over winter break, Kyra took extra time off from school to spend with her mother. Her first Monday back to school, she began complaining of pain in her chest and the school nurse sent her home.

Norma took Kyra to the doctor, who began treating her for asthma but also put her on antibiotics. By the weekend, neither treatment seemed to have any effect. Kyra's spirits stayed high though – she got up, got dressed, asked her grandmother to take her to the video store and waited in the car while Norma rented the six movies Kyra requested. She rested all weekend watching the movies, but the next Monday she was worse. They returned to the doctor, who gave Kyra another inhaler.

"We were taking it one step at a time," Norma said. "As her body started to deteriorate, it was obvious to me that the inhalers weren't working and the antibiotics definitely weren't working. I am normally pretty aggressive with the doctors, having been a cancer

patient. When we took her back to the doctor, I have no idea why I did not demand that she have a chest x-ray."

By Tuesday, Norma could tell Kyra was having difficulty breathing and she had a fever of 105 degrees. She sounded terribly congested. When she finally managed to cough, she coughed up blood.

The family rushed Kyra to the emergency room. She was immediately placed under a tent, away from her family. A nurse waited with Kyra while the doctors induced a coma and intubated her. It was the last time the family would see her conscious.

Kyra was then transferred to a children's intensive care unit in Reno where the family was told she had Influenza B as well as a Staph infection that weakened her immune system.

Her body was unable to fight off the flu virus, and it turned into pneumonia.

"We didn't know how seriously ill she was," Norma said. "They were mostly concerned about the influenza B. Because she was not coughing or breathing on her own, all they could do was compress her chest. Her lungs were full of blood."

Norma was told Kyra needed treatment equipment not available in Reno and would be transferred again to a specialty facility in Sacramento. A friend with a private plane flew the family to Sacramento to wait for Kyra, and a care flight team came to Reno to retrieve Kyra. But Kyra died in the air on the way to Sacramento.

"I was so overwhelmed with Kyra's death," Norma recalled.

In the months that followed, Danielle succumbed to her cancer and Norma was re-diagnosed with breast cancer. Norma recovered from cancer for the third time, but never recovered from Kyra's death. She takes life one day at a time, devoting herself to volunteer work directing and producing plays and promoting arts in the community. She finds hope in the support of friends and family.

She holds the memory of Kyra close to her heart. She was reminded of the time Kyra played Maid Marian when Kyra's friend, who played Robin Hood, came to visit Norma this year. He just got his driver's license and, missing Kyra, talked of all the fun things they could drive to if she were still alive.

"I have a lot of wonderful friends in the community," Norma said. "I needed help just to get through each day. A lot of people's prayers, their good will, and being around people that have a strong faith helped picked me up a little bit."



Norma Conway

How bad is the flu?

Over a period of 30 years between 1976 and 2006, estimates of flu-associated deaths in the U.S. range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people per year.

According to the Center for Disease Control, flu is unpredictable and how severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next depending on many things, including what flu viruses are spreading, how much flu vaccine is available, when vaccine is available, how many people get vaccinated and how well the flu vaccine is matched to flu viruses that are causing illness.

Anyone can get the flu – even healthy people – and serious problems from influenza can happen at any age. But some people are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications if they get sick. This includes people 65 years and older,

people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease), pregnant women and young children.

Most people who get influenza will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some people will develop complications (such as pneumonia) as a result of the flu, some of which can be life-threatening and result in death. Pneumonia, bronchitis and sinus and ear infections are three examples of complications from flu. The flu can make chronic health problems worse – people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic congestive heart failure may have worsening of this condition that is triggered by the flu.

Seasonal flu is a serious disease that causes illness, hospitalizations and deaths every year in the U.S.

How Does the Flu Vaccine Work?

The seasonal influenza vaccine, like many other vaccines, works by creating antibodies to the virus within the body. The vaccine “tricks” the body into protecting itself against the disease as though it had been contracted from someone else or the environment, but does so safely without the illness and risks associated with the actual disease. To get the body to respond with the proper antibodies, vaccines contain the virus they protect against. However, the virus in the vaccine is dead or weakened significantly so that it cannot make anyone sick.

“It is so minute that our immune system has the ability to fight it, creating antibodies that protect us,” said Erin Seward, Nevada Immunization Program Manager with the Nevada State Health Division. “Antibodies give our body the code to protect us from developing a disease.”

The nasal spray vaccine provides more antibodies than the flu shot because it contains the live, weakened virus. The immune response builds both blood born and mucosal antibodies. Because it is alive, though, it is only given to healthy individuals. People who have underlying health conditions, pregnant women and children under two may only receive the flu shot, which contains the dead virus and builds blood born antibodies. Children receiving either vaccine for the first time need a second shot or spray within a month.

It takes approximately two weeks for either the flu shot or the nasal spray to be effective because the body needs time to build antibodies against the virus.

Vaccine Safety

Flu vaccine manufacturers spend millions of dollars on vaccine safety – testing them and making sure they are effective and won’t cause poor outcomes – and the vaccines must be approved by the FDA.

“There are high, rigorous standards for vaccines,” Erin Seward, Nevada Immunization Program Manager with the Nevada State Health Division said. “They’re very, very safe.”

Most people do not experience any reaction to the flu vaccine. If they do, it is mild and includes a sore arm or mild body aches for a day or two. Potential serious reactions, which are extremely rare and must be reported to the CDC and the FDA, can usually be prevented with proper screening. For example, a nurse or doctor would not administer a flu shot to someone who has a fever or a baby fewer than 6 months old.

Babies fewer than 6 months old are at higher risk of complications from the flu, so it is critical to vaccinate those around the baby to create a “cocoon” of immunity. Mothers should be vaccinated while they are still pregnant. The vaccine is safe for her baby, and she passes on antibodies that the newborn will retain at birth.

Two popular myths about the flu vaccine are that it causes the flu and that it causes autism; neither have merit. The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu because the virus in the vaccine is dead or weakened significantly. One highly flawed study claimed a link between the mercury-containing vaccine preservative thimerosal and autism. However, numerous studies have been conducted proving no link exists. There is more mercury in a can of tuna and naturally occurring in the human body than in vaccines. Parents still concerned may request preservative-free vaccines for children.

“It’s about public health,” Seward said. “It’s about preventing disease. The chance of something really bad happening because you didn’t get the flu vaccine is much greater than the risks of getting the flu vaccine.”



Flu Vaccine Q&A with Epidemiologists Dr. Ihsan Azzam and Dr. Ben Sun

Q. Who should get an influenza vaccine?

A. “Everyone six months of age and older should have an influenza vaccine. As long as we are breathing and we are social, we are at risk for contracting the flu. Certain groups of people are at higher risk for complications from the flu. Unfortunately, one of those groups is little ones younger than age six months, and we cannot give them the vaccine. So we immunize people around them.” **Ihsan Azzam**

“Certain groups may be at high risk for exposure, like health care workers and travelers. Any time you are exposed to a lot of people, your odds of being exposed to someone who is sick with influenza increase. People at higher risk of influenza complications include those with asthma, diabetes, cancer, people over 65 years of age, pregnant women, children younger than five and people with HIV or AIDS.” **Ben Sun**

Q. What time of year should I get a flu vaccine?

A. “People should be vaccinated at the beginning of each flu season. Our influenza season generally lasts from October through March or April. The flu virus survives longer in colder environments. Some of our behaviors in the winter months lead to higher chances of spreading the virus from one person to another.” **BS**

Q. Why do I have to get a vaccination every year?

A. “One reason for yearly vaccinations is that the duration of vaccine protection is short term. Another reason is that we are often faced with different flu viruses from year to year. Usually the vaccine covers three strains, and the selection of the strains occurs before the upcoming flu season, attempting to predict what will happen.” **IA**

“Flu viruses constantly mutate and change. Based upon research, virus strains for the vaccine are selected according to what’s predicted to best protect the population. Yearly vaccination is recommended because a person’s immune protection from vaccination decreases over time.” **BS**

Q. How do I know this year’s vaccine protects me against the right virus strains?

A. “Usually there’s a fairly good match. Three influenza virus strains used in the seasonal flu vaccine are selected each year based on which influenza viruses are found around the world, and how they are spreading. A variety of factors help best predict which three vaccine virus strains should be used for maximum effectiveness.” **BS**

“Even when the three strains are totally different, you will be protected because there are a lot of cross immunities among the different flu viruses.” **IA**

Q&A continued on page 6

Q. Is there anyone who should not receive the vaccine?

A. “People who have severe allergies to chicken eggs should not get vaccinated without consulting their physician. People who should not get the flu vaccine include those who have had a severe reaction to a flu vaccine in the past; children under six months of age; people who are currently ill with a moderate to severe illness; and people with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome. Those who think they fall into these groups should consult with a physician, and follow prevention tips. It is important that people who live with or care for these people get vaccinated to protect them.” **BS**

Q. Can the flu vaccine make me sick?

A. “The virus in the flu shot is dead and cannot cause the disease. The virus in the nasal spray is so weakened it cannot cause the disease. Someone who comes down with the flu right after a vaccination was already incubating an infection at the time of receiving the flu shot. The flu shot didn’t have anything to do with that infection.” **IA**

“Almost all people who receive the influenza vaccine have no serious problems. If there is a problem, it would be a mild, manageable allergic reaction. Sometimes there are minor side effects such as soreness, redness, or swelling at the site of the injection, a low-grade fever or body aches. These mild side effects indicate your immune system is being activated to respond to the vaccine.” **BS**

Q. Am I guaranteed not to get the flu once I get vaccinated?

A. “There’s no 100% guarantee with any vaccine. It takes approximately two weeks for your body to build enough antibodies to protect against influenza. A vaccinated person might be exposed to a flu virus that is very different from what’s in the vaccine. The resulting illness could be a milder form because the vaccine cross-protected against other strains. Also, people may believe they have the flu, when in reality it could be something else with similar symptoms.” **BS**

Q. What would happen if virtually everyone got vaccinated?

A. “That is the goal, not only for the flu shot but every kind of vaccine. High levels of immunized people leads to herd immunity, which means



Dr. Ihsan Azzam

PHOTO BY AMY BECK

the entire community is better protected. If everyone were immunized, the virus wouldn’t have anywhere to go. The flu season would be shorter, the hospitalizations would go down, and the mortality rate would be reduced tremendously.” **IA**

Q. If I get sick, how do I know if I have the flu and need to stay home?

A. “You don’t need to know whether you have the flu or not. If you are sick with the flu or with something else, you should stay home to protect yourself and others. It is always good practice to stay at home and get well.” **IA**

Q. What else can I do to prevent the flu?

A. “Besides getting vaccinated, there are things we can do to reduce the spread of the germs that cause respiratory illness. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use your arm or shoulder to limit the amount that gets spread out into the air. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Avoid contact with people who are sick. Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched by someone who is sick. If you are sick, stay home so you don’t spread it to other people.” **BS**

Protecting Yourself and Your Community from the Flu *By Jeff Chinn*

During the winter months, nothing is quite as ubiquitous as the flu. Once one person catches it, it seems to be everywhere. This virus doesn’t discriminate; it can affect anybody in any age group and is easily passed from one person to another. And for higher risk individuals, like children under two years old, pregnant women, people 65 years old or older and people with chronic health conditions, it can even lead to death. So, once the mercury begins to drop, do yourself a favor and take preventative care to protect yourself.

The number one thing you can do to prevent the flu is get vaccinated. This is recommended for everybody six months of age or older as soon as the vaccine become available. The 2011-2012 vaccine will protect against the influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the H1N1 virus that emerged in 2009 to cause a pandemic.

Parents of young children should be especially cautious of the flu. Each year, an average of 20,000 children under the age of five are hospitalized because of flu-related complications. Influenza causes more hospitalizations among young children than any other vaccine-preventable disease. As with adults, the single best way to protect children against seasonal flu and its potential severe complications is a seasonal influenza vaccine each year.

The next best preventative measure is to teach children when they should wash their hands and the correct way to wash their hands.

Whether you have influenza and are trying to keep it contained or are trying to prevent yourself from being infected by influenza, washing your hands is a very important preventative step. People frequently touch their nose, mouth and eyes with their hands without being aware, so keeping hands clean will stop the flu from spreading. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol rub containing at least 60 percent alcohol is advised.

If you do get sick, stay home! Going to work, school or even running errands while infected with the flu exposes everyone around you to the virus. If you have the flu, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever has dissipated. Your friends and family will thank you.

If you know somebody who has the flu, avoid close contact with them – not to make them feel embarrassed but to defend yourself from what could be weeks of sickness. Experts believe flu viruses spread mainly by respiratory droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths and noses of people nearby and infect them.

Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing. This will keep your hands clean and may prevent those around you from catching your germs. Just be sure to throw the tissues away after using them. And if tissues aren’t available, do your best Dracula impression and cough or sneeze into your elbow. If you do cough or sneeze into your hands, be sure to wash them immediately. This not only helps prevent the spread of the flu but can also help prevent the spreading of other viruses like severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and whooping cough.

A year round method of influenza prevention is to practice good health habits. Getting plenty of sleep, being physically active, managing your stress, drinking plenty of fluids and eating nutritious foods all play a part in maintaining a healthy body. The more you practice these habits, the more prepared you’ll be for flu season.

You should wash your hands:

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before eating food.
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick.
- Before and after treating a cut or wound.
- After using the toilet.
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- After touching an animal or animal waste.
- After touching garbage.

And the proper way to wash your hands:

- Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold).
- Apply soap and rub hands together to make a lather.
- Scrub well, including the backs of hands, between fingers and under nails.
- Continue scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

School District Takes Action to Vaccinate

By Anna Barela

The Washoe County School District, the Nevada State Health and Human Services and the Northern Nevada Immunization Coalition are teaming up to vaccinate elementary students throughout Washoe County.

The three organizations’ missions intersect around vaccination of children. State health offices and the coalition both have a mission of reducing the rate of communicable disease exposure to prevent the public from getting sick. The school district has an educational mission to ensure students come to school maximum days and to prevent issues that would interfere with a child coming to school.

According to Dana Balchunas, school district Director of Student Health Services, “We have a compelling interest in making sure kids are immunized, that they don’t get the flu, and that they don’t spread communicable diseases to others. We work together for this common mission.”

Piloted last year in select schools, the new program expanded this year to serve more than 40 elementary schools. It goes beyond distributing information to parents and delivers the crucial vaccines directly to students while they are in school. This allows parents to simply sign a consent form rather than missing work to take their children to get vaccinated. Offered free of charge, it also eliminates financial barriers.



PRINCIPAL ADVOCATES NEW PROGRAM

Jonna Au Coin is in her fifth year as principal of Sierra Vista elementary school in Reno, serving 400 children grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. Part of the Washoe County School District, Sierra Vista was one of the first schools to participate in the new on-site vaccine program. This fall marked the second year for the clinic, vaccinating all the students whose parents consented to vaccination – over half of the school population – in about three hours.

“It was really accessible,” said Au Coin. “A lot of my families don’t have transportation or money for co-pays. They would not get the vaccine if it wasn’t for this. It was amazing!”

AuCoin usually sees dozens of sick children each year who miss up to 10 days of school to recover. Last year, after the first clinic was held, Au Coin observed a drastic decrease in sick children and an increase in attendance throughout the year. She thinks vaccination is essential. Parents seem to agree, and were already asking at the beginning of this year if the clinic would be held again.

“This is such a community-builder,” said Au Coin. “We can reach out to our community and support them any way we can, because they really have limited resources. This was just one way we could support them, not only with health but financially.”

SCHOOL NURSE WELCOMES SCHOOL VACCINATIONS

Kim Icenhour is school nurse for three schools in the Washoe County School District. She is very excited to see the on-site vaccine program expand this year. The health of students is very important to her, and flu vaccinations support this goal.

“These clinics are a great thing because they protect the students from the flu,” Icenhour said. “It’s a great opportunity for the parents. Overall, the response has been great.”

Icenhour is a registered nurse with a Bachelor’s of Science in nursing. Her nursing experience ranged from hospital and home care to adolescent psychiatric care settings before she became a school nurse three years ago. She enjoys the hands-on time she spends now assisting children with their health needs.

“I enjoy working with children and their families,” said Icenhour. “School nursing is challenging in its own way. There’s never a dull moment!”

As Icenhour’s students face another flu season this year, she hopes the increase in vaccination rates brought by the flu clinic will result in higher attendance and fewer sick children. For those students with underlying health issues, she knows getting the flu can end in extended recovery times, hospitalization and even death. The ultimate goal for Icenhour is for all students to remain healthy, happy and in school learning with their friends.



Other Ways to Get Involved

Become an advocate for your family! Get involved by being a role model in the community. Encourage those around you to get vaccinated and share information about why it’s important.

According to Heidi S. Hurst, MA, Director, Northern Nevada Immunization Coalition, “The need for immunization remains just as strong in adulthood as when we were vulnerable children. As adults, we must continue to maintain our own health because we are also affecting the health of our families by teaching them how to care for themselves. Remind your family, friends, co-workers and those in the community to get vaccinated, especially annually against seasonal influenza. If they are up-to-date on all of their vaccinations, they protect themselves and those around them, especially babies too young to be vaccinated.”

Those interested in promoting awareness in the community can also get involved with the Northern Nevada Immunization Coalition. The coalition needs volunteers for committees and projects, as well as the community board.

Visit www.ImmunizeNevada.org/nnic or call 775-770-6713 for more information.

Get Schooled about Flu!

The Northern Nevada Immunization Coalition invites you to celebrate National Influenza Vaccination Week and join us on December 9 at the Oats Park Art Center in Fallon for a free, informative day all about the flu! Included in the day are nationally known guest speakers, networking with colleagues and a hosted lunch. Register online at www.immunizenevada.org/flusummit.



No More Excuses, Get vaccinated!

“OH, THE FLU ISN’T SO BAD, RIGHT?”

Wrong! The flu can lead to serious illness, including pneumonia. Although high-risk groups are at increased risk of serious complications, even healthy people can get sick enough to miss work or school for a significant amount of time or even be hospitalized.

“BUT THE FLU VACCINE MAKES ME SICK.”

The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. The most common side effects from a shot are a sore arm and maybe a low fever or achiness. The nasal-spray flu vaccine might cause congestion, runny nose, sore throat or cough. If you do experience them at all, these side effects are mild and short-lived.

“I’M HEALTHY, I DON’T NEED A VACCINE.”

Anyone can become sick with the flu and experience serious complications. Besides, you might be around someone who’s at high risk from the flu... a baby, your grandparents, or even a friend. You don’t want to be the one spreading the flu, do you?

“IT’S TOO LATE FOR ME TO GET PROTECTION FROM A FLU VACCINATION THIS SEASON.”

Flu seasons are unpredictable, beginning as early as fall and last late into spring. As long as flu season isn’t over, it’s not too late to get vaccinated, even during winter.

“I’LL GET VACCINATED ONLY IF MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS GET SICK WITH THE FLU.”

If you wait until people around you get sick from the flu, it will probably be too late to protect yourself. It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to provide full protection.

“I HATE SHOTS.”

The very minor pain of a flu shot is nothing compared to the suffering that can be caused by the flu. The flu can make you very sick for several days, send you to the hospital, or worse.

“I GOT A FLU VACCINE LAST YEAR, SO I DON’T NEED ANOTHER ONE.”

Your body’s level of immunity from a vaccine received last year is expected to have declined. You may not have enough immunity to be protected this season. You should also get vaccinated again to protect yourself against the three viruses that are likely to circulate this season.

“I ONLY EAT LOCAL, WILD, OR ORGANIC FOOD. WHY WOULD I WANT TO INJECT SOMETHING ARTIFICIAL INTO MY SYSTEM?”

The flu vaccine contains such a minute quantity of artificial ingredients and is taken so infrequently that the benefits far outweigh the risk. The air we breath every day contains far more toxins, as do the medications required if you do get sick.

“I DON’T TRUST THAT THE VACCINE IS SAFE.”

Flu vaccines have been given for more than 50 years and have a very good safety track record. They are made the same way each year and their safety is closely monitored. Hundreds of millions of flu vaccines have been given safely.

VACCINATION RESOURCES:

CARSON CITY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hours: Walk-ins 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. on Thursdays. No appointments.

Location: 900 E Long Street, Carson City, NV

Cost: \$20 for all ages; \$25 for flu mist

Details: 775-887-2190

HAWC CLINIC

Hours: Flu shots on walk-in basis Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Location: 1055 South Wells Ave, Suites 100, 110 & 120 & 150, Reno, NV

Cost: \$15

Details: 775-329-6300

NORTH LAKE TAHOE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Hours: Walk-in program any time for those 12 years and older

Location: Fire Station 11, 871 Tananger St., Incline Village, NV

Cost: \$20 or free with copy of a Medicare card

Details: In home or business appointments can be scheduled by calling NLTFPD at 775-833-8106.

RENOWN

Hours: Visit website or call for various clinic hours. Children under 9 need an appointment.

Location: Several locations, visit website or call for details.

Cost: \$25 adults with HMO & PPO plans; \$28 for others. No out-of-pocket costs for Medicare beneficiaries (Part B) and members of Senior Care Plus or Hometown Health fully insured.

Details: www.renown.org/flu or 775-982-5757

SAINT MARY’S

Hours: By appointment 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Location: Saint Mary’s, 1625 E. Prater Way, Suite 102, Sparks, NV

Hours: By appointment 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Friday, November 18 and Friday, December 2

Location: Saint Mary’s, 1625 E. Prater Way, Suite 102, Sparks, NV

Details: 775-770-7100

Saint Mary’s also offers clinics at the following Walmart locations:

Location: 5065 Pyramid Highway, Sparks, NV

Details: 775-770-7664

Location: 4855 Kietzke Lane, Reno, NV

Details: 775-770-7664

For other Saint Mary’s community locations, call 775-770-3553.

Cost: \$28 for adults; \$30 for children; \$32 flu mist for children and adults. No out-of-pocket cost if Saint Mary’s Health First (HMO/POS) or Health Choice (PPO), Medicare Part B or Senior Dimension is primary insurance.

Details: 775-770-6210 or www.saintmarysreno.org

WASHOE COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

Hours: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Appointment required.

Location: 1001 East 9th Street, Building B, Reno, NV

Cost: \$16 for children; \$40 for adults. Some children can be eligible for free vaccinations if they qualify for state approved fee waiver.

Details: 775-328-2402