

Overdue For A New Point Of View On The Flu? Dr. Shawna Eischens

Welcome to the beautiful season of Fall-football games, all things pumpkin flavored, and the dreaded virus influenza. Before you run out and get your flu shot, read on to educate yourself so you can make the best choices for you and your family.

It is estimated that 5-20% of the United States population gets the flu each year and may experience a fever, cough, sore throat, aches, fatigue, and/or nasal symptoms. Complications may include pulmonary or cardiac issues and are of greater concern for people with asthma or those whose immune system is compromised.

Prevention - For sports fans, this can be thought of as your “defensive line” preventing illness from temporarily defeating your body. Hand washing, proper nutrition (eating whole foods, vegetables, and fresh garlic, avoiding sugar, alcohol, and processed foods), sleep, and stress management are just a few ways to keep your body in prime shape to fight off lurking microbes that we encounter on a daily basis.

Infection - Even though we come in contact with many viruses and bacteria every day, we aren't always sick thanks to our powerful internal defensive line. Contrary to what many may believe, it is not unhealthy to come down with the occasional cold or flu that passes quickly. The duration and frequency of illness is a great indicator of how our body's immune system is functioning. By fasting or nourishing your body with anti microbial foods and herbs and allowing your body to rest to focus on healing, you will be able to overcome illnesses more quickly.

Knowing that the influenza virus is prevalent, is the flu vaccine your best option?

Reliable statistics on the efficacy of the flu vaccine are difficult to find for various reasons, but it has been estimated that vaccines are 19-89% effective at preventing the flu. Published research from June 2013 states that for those immunized against the flu in any given year, only about 1 person out of 100 received any benefit. It was also found that the immunization did not reduce complications or days lost from work due to illness. Vaccines in children aged two years or younger are not significantly more efficacious than placebo.

Since the flu vaccine is developed based on previously circulating strains and geographical region, it is difficult to know how protected you will be from this year's influenza virus.

What's in a flu shot?

Although ingredients vary based on the form and name of a vaccine, the following ingredients are most commonly used in influenza vaccinations.

- Chicken embryo and egg protein are used to culture the virus and may create issues for people allergic to eggs.

- Formaldehyde is a chemical used to inactivate the virus and is neurotoxic and carcinogenic.
- Thimerosal/mercury is a preservative used in multi-dose vials. This is also a neurotoxin.
- Neomycin is an antibiotic that can damage the kidneys when given intravenously.
- Various other additives and stabilizers such as MSG, sucrose, gelatin, etc. are often used as well.

Just like many decisions in life and medicine, a risk vs. benefit ratio must be considered whether you want to inject these chemicals into your body to possibly avoid contracting the flu.

What other options are there besides the flu vaccine?

Foregoing a traditional flu vaccination does not mean that you should choose to do nothing to protect yourself and others against the flu. In addition to the suggestions mentioned in the “prevention” paragraph above, there are various immune boosting and anti-viral options for you to take advantage of.

- Nutrient IV’s, homeopathic remedies or injections, herbal tinctures, and specific supplements are all safe and effective options to keep you healthy this flu season and beyond.
- Colostrum supplementation has been shown to be at least 3 times more effective than vaccination to prevent flu in both healthy subjects and patients with high-risk cardiovascular concerns.
- Homeopathic injections don’t contain eggs, viral particles or preservatives and have been shown to prevent viruses, allergies, sinusitis, and asthma.

However you decide to defend yourself against this year’s flu, know that there are various safe and effective options besides the traditional flu vaccine. To discuss options on how to protect you and your family from potential or current illness, schedule an appointment with a physician at Rockwood Natural Medicine at 480-767-7119. www.rockwoodnaturalmedicine.com

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/vaccineeffect.htm>

<http://summaries.cochrane.org/CD001269/vaccines-to-prevent-influenza-in-healthy-adults>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22895945#>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm#MS2>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17456621>

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6207a1.htm?s_cid=rr6207a1_w#Tab1

http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials/formaldehyde_508.pdf

<http://www.vaccinesafety.edu/components-Influenza.htm>

<http://www.nvic.org/vaccines-and-diseases/Influenza.aspx>

<http://www.nvic.org/vaccines-and-diseases/Influenza/Influenza-Vaccine-Package-Inserts.aspx>