

The Wellness Family

Dr. Chang Keeps You Informed

The Flu Shot

Every year, just before the weather turns colder, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) begins its advertising campaign geared toward scaring the populace into getting the flu vaccine. They talk about the number of deaths each year that are contributed to the flu, the number of missed work days that cost employers hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost man hours, they point to the benefits of not getting sick and then even make arrangements to go to the workplace and administer the vaccine.

Considering their dire warnings and grave predictions should we line up for the shot or should we arm ourselves with the facts before deciding?

What is the flu?

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. The most common symptoms are fever, headache, fatigue, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, diarrhea and vomiting.

The flu can cause complications such as pneumonia or dehydration and may aggravate existing conditions like asthma and heart disease. It is spread from person to person in respiratory droplets when people who are infected cough or sneeze.

What is the flu shot?

The flu shot is an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot has been approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease).

What the CDC doesn't tell you is the other ingredients in this vaccine cocktail. These can include:

- Ethylene glycol – antifreeze
- Phenol – this is a disinfectant and a dye
- Formaldehyde – a known cancer-causing agent
- Aluminum – this has been associated with Alzheimer's disease and seizures as well as has produced cancer in laboratory mice
- Thimerosal – a mercury disinfectant and preservative that can result in brain injury and autoimmune disease

Joseph Mercola, M.D., says that many authors have noted a direct correlation between the number of flu shots and the incidence of Alzheimer's, attributing to the aluminum and mercury in every flu shot.

What are the side-effects?

Just like all vaccines there are side-effects with the flu shot. The CDC and other organizations would have you overlook them for the supposed benefit of being inoculated against the flu.

The minor side-effects can include but are not limited to: soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site, a low grade fever and other aches and pains.



“The flu shot is only 70 to 90% effective.”

The more severe and life-threatening complications have proven to be rare but the danger still exists that someone can suffer severe effects from this alleged beneficial vaccine. Many healthcare providers are concerned that the actual number of life-threatening complications remains under-reported.

The most commonly reported dangerous side effect is an allergic reaction. Since the vaccine is grown in eggs, it is more dangerous for those who have had an allergic reaction to other vaccines in the past. These reactions can include breathing problems such as hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heartbeat or dizziness. The CDC has recognized the danger and recommends that those who have had an allergic reaction to a vaccine in the past avoid the flu shot until speaking with their healthcare professional.

A much more serious side effect is Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). This is a disease in which the body damages its own nerve cells, resulting in muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis. While most people

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eventually recover, some have permanent nerve damage and between 5 to 6% of those who develop GBS will die.

The CDC would remind you that only 6 out of every 1,000,000 people injected with the flu shot will develop GBS, but are these odds acceptable?

Are the side-effects worth it?

After careful consideration of the risks associated with the vaccine, it's wise to weigh those risks against those of the flu. The CDC talks about the benefits of being vaccinated, but are those benefits really backed up by the facts?

The flu vaccine is always changing because the flu strains change from one year to the next. The manufacturers of the vaccine take a shot in the dark and hope that they'll hit the right strain each year, but the fact is the flu shot is only 70 – 90% effective.

Dean Eurich, a clinical epidemiologist and professor at the school of public health at the University of Alberta, recently considered the data and reported that over the last 20 years in the United States, vaccination rates among the elderly have increased from 15 to 65 percent, but hospital admissions and death rates from all causes have not declined proportionately.

"Only about 10 percent of winter-time deaths in the United States are attributable to influenza, thus to suggest that the vaccine can reduce 50 percent of deaths from all causes is implausible in our opinion," Eurich said.

A further study by Sumit Majumdar, M.D. reached the same conclusion. After considering all the facts and taking into account immunizations, socioeconomic

status, sex, history of smoking and the severity of the flu, the actual benefit of the flu shot is "reduced to a statistically non-significant level of 19%" according to the research.

What about the complications of the flu?

The CDC is good at scaring people into thinking they need to be vaccinated against the flu to avoid dangerous complications, such as pneumonia, but recent studies are debunking that theory.

A recent article published in the Lancet medical journal has proven that the flu vaccine is having little or no effect on the number of people developing pneumonia each year.

A recent study led by Michael Jackson, M.D. of the Seattle-based Group Health Center for Health Studies compared 1,173 pneumonia patients between the ages of 65 and 94 who had been vaccinated with 2,346 people who hadn't. They found that the risk of contracting the lung disease wasn't reduced by the shot.

References:

S. Woloshin, et al; A Shot of Fear; Washington Post, October 25, 2005; HE01

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www.cdc.gov/FLU/about/qa/flushot.htm

www.cbc.ca/health/story/2008/08/29/flu-shots.html

This information is not meant to imply that a Doctor of Chiropractic treats, cures, or prevents any disease.

Dear Patient,

Dr. Chang is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care, and with that dedication comes an understanding that an informed patient makes wise decisions for themselves and their families. So, take a moment to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

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