



Influenza Fact Sheet for Health Care Workers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Recommends Influenza Vaccination for all Health Care Workers

- The CDC clearly states that the single best way to reduce influenza transmission in health care settings is through increased influenza immunization.
- The CDC recommends that all health care workers receive an annual influenza vaccination to prevent transmission to patients.
- Vaccination of health care workers should begin as soon as influenza vaccine becomes available and should continue throughout the entire influenza season. The influenza season usually peaks in February, so getting immunized as soon as vaccine is available or throughout the fall and winter is beneficial.

Health Care Workers and Influenza Immunization Rates

- Health care workers are frequently the source of influenza in health care settings. This is particularly troublesome for the vulnerable patients in their care, who may be at increased risk of severe complications, including influenza-related mortality.
- Outbreaks have been documented in high-risk patient care areas.
- Influenza vaccination rates among health care workers are extremely low. In any given year, annual influenza vaccination rates among health care workers remains below 50 percent.
- Surprisingly, health care workers cite reasons similar to the general public for not getting vaccinated, including the mistaken belief that the vaccine can cause influenza.

Benefits of Influenza Immunization of Health Care Workers

- Influenza immunization is an important patient safety issue. Unvaccinated health care workers can spread influenza to patients, co-workers and family members, leading to influenza-related illnesses and deaths.
- Annual influenza immunization of health care workers:
 - Prevents severe illnesses and deaths.
 - Protects patients, families and co-workers.
 - Maintains adequate staffing levels during community influenza outbreaks.

Infection Passed from Health Care Workers Can Increase Morbidity and Mortality Among Patients.

- Many believe only the elderly are at risk for increased complications from influenza. However, any individual with certain underlying medical conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, heart disease, immune deficiency) is at increased risk, as are infants and young children.



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