

BLUE FISH PEDIATRICS

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KATY EDITION

Biannual Newsletter

In This Issue Find Out:

- Who should receive the flu vaccine?
- Who should NOT receive the flu vaccine?
- What's available?
- Seasonal Influenza vaccine.

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What You Need to Know About the Flu

The flu is an illness caused by a virus. Like a cold, it attacks the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu can sometimes lead to other problems like pneumonia, ear/sinus problems, dehydration, and worsening of asthma. For most of us, the flu will go away in 1-2 weeks.

How can I catch the flu?

- The flu is easily passed from person to person via direct contact or via airborne pathogens (coughing and sneezing).
- A person can also get the flu by touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching his mouth or nose.

Who is most at risk for getting the flu?

Everyone is at risk for getting the flu, but for some people the flu can cause serious illness. Those most at risk include:

- All children aged 6 months to 5 years
- All persons aged older than or equal to 50 years
- Children and adolescents (aged 6 months to 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- Adults and children who have lung (including asthma), heart (except high blood pressure), kidney, liver, brain/nerve, blood, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus)
- Adults and children who have a weak immune system either due to illness or medication
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term-care facilities.
- Health care personnel
- People exposed to at-risk people



What are the symptoms of the flu?

The most common signs of the flu include:

- Fever
- Headache and muscle ache
- Fatigue
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Vomiting or diarrhea (more common in children)

Who should receive the flu vaccine?

It is best for everyone, including breastfeeding mothers, to receive the flu vaccine (save those who have contraindications to receiving it, as listed below). In the event of a known flu vaccine shortage, we may be mandated by the CDC to follow a prioritization plan.

Who should NOT receive the flu vaccine?

Those who should not receive the injectable flu vaccine:

- Children less than 6 months of age
- Anyone with moderate to severe febrile illness
- Anyone with a history of a severe allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis, to any components of the flu vaccine or eggs.
- Anyone with an active neurological disorder
- Anyone with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome
- Also, please let us know if you have a bleeding disorder or are receiving anticoagulant therapy.
- Due to the complexities of pregnancy, we will not be administering the injectable flu vaccine to pregnant patients. Please contact your obstetrician to be vaccinated.

Intranasal flu vaccine not recommended for this year

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted that live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), also known as the "nasal spray" flu vaccine, should **not** be used during the 2017-2018 flu season. ACIP continues to recommend annual flu vaccination, with either the inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV) or recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV), for everyone 6 months and older.



See page 4 for children under 9 years of age to see how many doses are needed this season.

What's available?

Flu viruses are always changing. Each year, experts study thousands of flu virus samples from around the world to figure out which viruses are making people sick and how these viruses are changing. With this information, they forecast which viruses are most likely to make the most people sick during the next flu season. These strains are then used to make the flu vaccine for the next flu season.

It is recommended that quadrivalent vaccines for use in the 2017-2018 influenza season (northern hemisphere winter) contain the following:

- an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like (B/Victoria lineage) virus;
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus.

The flu vaccine cannot be given to children under 6 months of age. Therefore, we recommend vaccinating all family members who live with the infant to create "herd immunity." This year, we only offer one form of the flu vaccine: injection vaccine.

Age	Dose
6 months - 3 years (Injectable)	.25 ml injection vaccine
3 years and older (Injectable)	.5 ml injection vaccine

Note: Children 6 months to younger than 9 years of age may need to receive the vaccine twice separated by at least 4 weeks. See page 4 of this packet for exact details.

Blue Fish will only be using quadrivalent vaccines for the 2017-2018 season. These immunizations protect against four flu strains.



The shot prevents serious complications from the flu in 70% to 90% of young, healthy adults.

"About 20-50% of the U.S. population gets the flu each season"

When to get vaccinated?

Yearly flu vaccination should begin in September or as soon as the vaccine is available and continue throughout the influenza season, as late as March or beyond. The timing and duration of influenza seasons vary.

While influenza outbreaks can happen as early as October, most of the time influenza activity peaks in February or later. About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against influenza virus infection develop in the body.



It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to be effective.

One or Two Shots Needed?

If your child is **9 years or older**, regardless of what flu immunizations have been given in the past, they will only need **ONE** immunization this flu season.

However, if your child is **under 9 years of age**, they may need **TWO** immunizations this year. See the chart below to assist you in knowing how many shots your child will need this flu season.

If your child needs 2 flu vaccines this year, they should be spaced apart by a minimum of 4 weeks (28 days). There is no deadline by which the 2nd flu vaccine needs to be completed, but once the minimum 4 weeks has passed, the sooner the better as your child will have optimal protection only after the 2nd immunization.

Shot only appointments can be made during regular clinic hours at the Katy office to receive the second dose for anytime after 28 days following receiving the first dose.



“Seasonal” influenza vaccines are formulated to prevent annual flu. This year, the shot will again include protection against pandemic H1N1 influenza.

	0 flu shots before July 2017	1 flu shot before July of 2017	2 flu shots before July 2017
Under 9 years of age	2 flu shots needed	2 flu shots needed	1 flu shot needed
9 years or older	1 flu shot needed	1 flu shot needed	1 flu shot needed

Check out our website for updates on our flu vaccine availability!
www.bluefishmd.com

Egg Allergy Protocol (per CDC)

- Can the child eat lightly cooked egg (e.g., scrambled egg) without reaction?
If so the vaccine will be administered per usual protocol
- After eating eggs or egg-containing foods, does the child experience ONLY hives?
If so the vaccine will be administered and the child will be observed for reaction for at least 30 minutes following vaccination
- After eating eggs or egg-containing foods, does the child experience other symptoms such as: cardiovascular changes (e.g., hypotension), respiratory distress (e.g., wheezing), gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., nausea/vomiting), reaction requiring epinephrine, or reaction requiring emergency medical attention?
If so the child will be referred to an allergist with expertise in the management of allergic conditions for further evaluation.

When will the vaccines be available?

During regular office hours (starting in late August), the flu vaccine will be available at well visits, sick visits, and scheduled shot-only appointments for **all patients of Blue Fish Pediatrics / family members living in the same household with patients younger than 6 months old.**

The flu vaccine will be administered at all well child visits, sick visits, and scheduled shot-only appointments until supplies are exhausted.

- The availability of certain flu products may be limited towards the end of the flu season.
- The intranasal flu vaccine will NOT be available at Blue Fish.
- The intradermal flu vaccine will NOT be available at Blue Fish.
- The recombinant flu vaccine will NOT be available at Blue Fish.

For logistical reasons, patients can only receive their flu vaccine at the same location as their PCP (primary care provider).



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Payment

Please read the following carefully. Regrettably, the following explanation is complicated and beyond our control.

All parents (and family members who are not Blue Fish patients) receiving the flu vaccine will pay cash prices. If you would like to receive the flu vaccine via your insurance, please arrange for your flu vaccine through your regular doctor.

Cash paying patients: The cost is **\$35** for injection. If VFC eligible and VFC flu vaccine is in stock, then the cost is **\$14.85** for the administration fee.

Medicaid and CHIP: The vaccine is covered by your insurance as long as we have the VFC flu vaccine in stock. If we should run out of VFC stock, you can pay the cash price for the vaccine.

Commercial Insurance: You will need to pay your copay for your insurance. Even if your copay is higher than what we charge our cash paying patients, we are contractually obligated by the insurance carrier to charge you the full copay amount. Insurance companies are firm concerning this matter. We apologize for this inconvenience, but we are contractually obligated to do so. You have the option of receiving the flu vaccine elsewhere such as a grocery store or pharmacy for their cash price (as they are not contracted with your insurance compa-