

Better Breathing

A publication of
Breathe California
of the Bay Area

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Also Inside

- ◆ Get Your Flu Shot Today! p. 2
- ◆ California Bans the Sale of Ozone Air Purifiers, p. 3
- ◆ San Jose Adopts Policy to Make All City Parks Smoke-Free, p. 3
- ◆ Upcoming BBC Meetings, p. 4

6 Things You Should Know About the Flu Vaccine

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

With flu season around the corner, it's important for ALL lung disease patients to get a flu shot. Here are 6 things everyone should know about getting the flu vaccine.

1) Why get vaccinated?

Influenza (a.k.a. the flu) is a contagious disease caused by the influenza virus, which spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. Other illnesses can have the same symptoms and are often mistaken for influenza. But only an illness caused by the influenza virus is truly influenza.

Anyone can get influenza, but rates of infection are highest among children. For most people, it lasts only a few days and can cause fatigue, fever, sore throat, chills, cough, headache and muscle aches.

Some people get much sicker. Influenza can lead to pneumonia and can be dangerous for people with heart or breathing conditions. Each year, approximately 226,000 people are hospitalized because of influenza and 36,000 die - mostly elderly.

2) What is the influenza vaccine?

There are two types of influenza vaccine: *Inactivated (killed) vaccine*, or the "flu shot" is given by injection into the muscle; *Live, attenuated (weakened) influenza vaccine*, called LAIV, is sprayed into the nostrils.

For most people influenza vaccine prevents serious influenza-related illness. But it will not prevent "influenza-like" illnesses caused by other viruses. Because influenza viruses are always changing, influenza vaccines are updated every year and annual vaccination is recommended. Protection lasts up to a year and can take up to 2 weeks to develop after vaccination.

3) Who should get vaccinated?

Vaccination is recommended for anyone who is at risk for influenza complications or more likely to require medical care. This includes:

- Children 6 months to 5 years old.
- Anyone 50 years of age or older.
- Anyone 6 months to 18 years old on long-term aspirin treatment (who can develop Reye Syndrome if they contract the influenza virus).
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- Anyone with long-term health problems like: heart, kidney or lung disease; metabolic disease such as diabetes; or blood disorders.
- Anyone with a weakened immune system due to HIV/AIDS, long-term treatment with steroids, cancer treatment, or other health issues.

Continued on Page 2

Better Breathing



Don't Wait. Get Your Flu Shot Today!

With flu season just around the corner, now is time to protect yourself. All lung disease patients and their caregivers should receive flu vaccination to avoid serious health complications from influenza this winter.

To find local flu shot locations, simply call Breathe California at (408) 998-5865. You can also find up-to-date local flu shot information on our website. Just visit www.lungsrus.org and click on the link for flu shot locations.

Don't take a chance with your health this winter! Get your flu shot today!

To learn more about the flu shot, please call Breathe California at (408) 998-5865.

6 Things You Should Know...

Continued from page 1

- Anyone with muscle or nerve problems (i.e. seizure disorders or cerebral palsy) that can lead to breathing or swallowing problems.
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

Influenza vaccine is also recommended for anyone who lives with or cares for people at high risk for influenza-related complications or anyone who wants to reduce their likelihood of becoming ill or spreading influenza to others.

4) When should I get vaccinated?

Plan to get influenza vaccine in October or November if you can, but getting vaccinated in December or even later, will still be beneficial in most years. Influenza illness can occur any time from November through May and most cases usually occur in January or February. Most people need only one dose of influenza vaccine each year and it can be given at the same time as other types of vaccines, including pneumococcal vaccine.

5) Who should talk with a doctor before getting vaccinated?

You should talk to your doctor before getting the influenza vaccine if:

- You have severe allergies to eggs, one of the vaccine components or any other life-threatening allergies.
- You had a severe reaction after a previous dose of the vaccine.
- You have ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a severe paralytic illness also called GBS).

- You are moderately or severely ill.

Even if you have one of these factors, you may still be able to get the vaccine. But your doctor should help you make that decision.

6) What are the risks from inactivated influenza vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of a vaccine causing serious harm is extremely small. The viruses in inactivated influenza vaccine have been killed, so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine.

Mild problems can include: fever, aches, and soreness or swelling where the shot was given. If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days.

Life-threatening allergic reactions from vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it is usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot. If you are suffering from a severe reaction, you might notice a high fever, behavior changes, difficulty breathing, hoarseness, wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

If this happens, call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away. Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.

To learn more, ask your healthcare provider for more information on the influenza vaccine. You can also call your local health department or contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at 1-800-232-4636 or www.cdc.gov/flu

In the News

Each month, we are proud to bring you some of the latest news affecting lung disease patients. You can also find more news briefs and articles online by visiting:

www.lungsrus.org

Click on the News link from the menu bar to reach our newsroom. From there, you can view individual articles by clicking on the "News Briefs" link.

From the Newsroom, you can also read about the agency's latest work in the community. Click on the "Agency News" link to view our latest articles and press releases.

The following news briefs have been summarized from external sources and have been placed here solely to inform you of the latest in lung health news. Breathe California does not endorse their findings nor have they verified their accuracy.

California Bans the Sale of Ozone Air Purifiers

Source: Associated Press, September 28, 2007

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) voted to ban the sale of ozone air purifiers, citing evidence that the machines can pose significant health risks. Beginning in 2009, the regulations will ban the sale of those purifiers that produce more than 0.50 parts per million in ozone, a threshold that regulators say can be harmful to human health.

Ionic air purifiers emit ozone, one of the primary components in smog that has been found to cause coughing, shortness of breath, asthma attacks and chest pains. High levels of ozone have also been linked to the development of asthma and are especially dangerous to those in poor health or those with lung or

heart disease. While some ionic purifiers emit ozone as a byproduct (including ionic purifiers), others produce it intentionally, claiming that it can reduce levels of indoor air pollutants. According to research conducted by CARB, these devices could produce indoor levels of ozone that are several times higher than the state's outdoor health standard.

"People with respiratory problems need to be protected from ozone," Mary Nichols, chair of the Air Resources Board, said in a statement. "Consumers bought these devices hoping to reduce suffering for themselves or a loved one, only to make the situation worse."

San Jose Adopts Policy to Make All City Parks Smoke-Free

Source: Breathe California & the City of San Jose, October 23, 2007

On Oct. 23rd, the San Jose City Council adopted an ordinance making all city parks smoke-free. By a vote of 10-1, the council decided to ban smoking from curb-to-curb at public parks to ensure they remain safe, healthy and family-friendly environments.

"The health and well being of our children is extremely important to me and by banning smoking in public parks in San Jose, we are taking one more step forward as advocates of public health and safety for all," said Vice Mayor Dave Cortese who sponsored the proposal with Councilmember Madison Nguyen.

The policy was first proposed by Breathe California and the Tobacco Free Collaborative in an effort to protect children and families who enjoy city parks from the dangers of secondhand smoke. According to the Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, which is responsible for approximately 50,000 deaths in the U.S. each year.

San Jose is the latest to join a growing list of California cities – which includes San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, and most recently, Oakland – to ban smoking in its city parks.

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Better Breathing
is a publication of:

Breathe California
of the Bay Area
1469 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95126
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www.lungsrus.org

As the local lung health leader, Breathe California of the Bay Area fights lung disease in all its forms and works with its communities to promote lung health.

Upcoming Better Breathers Club Meetings

Monday, November 12th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – Palo Alto
Avenidas Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street
Fireplaces and Stoves for a Green Environment
Speaker: To Be Determined

Monday, November 26th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – San Jose
Breathe California Offices, 1469 Park Avenue
Fireplaces and Stoves for a Green Environment
Speaker: To Be Determined

A Look Ahead: Our December BBC Meetings

Gilroy – Thursday, December 6th, 11 am to 12 Noon
Palo Alto – Monday, December 10th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
San Jose – Monday, December 17th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

**Please note that the San Jose BBC's December meeting is scheduled one week early due to the Christmas holiday.*

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