



Immunize Kansas Coalition Recommends Keeping Kansas Children Healthy by Getting Influenza Vaccine

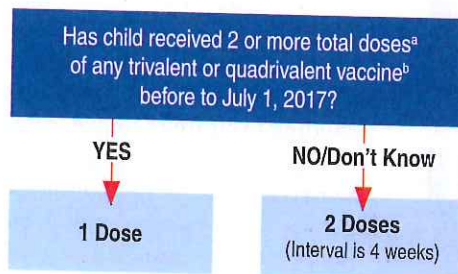
The flu vaccine is necessary and safe for children.

The flu virus is common and unpredictable, and it can cause serious complications and death, even in healthy children. Immunization for influenza is the best way to protect children.

Five to 20 percent of the U.S. population gets the flu, and every year, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from complications. At least 101 children died from the flu in the 2016-2017 influenza season. In Kansas, 99 deaths were directly attributed to influenza. This was a five-fold increase from the previous season, with only 19 deaths (Kansas Department of Health and Environment Kansas Surveillance Report Sept 2016-2017).

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual influenza immunization for all people ages 6 months and older, including children and adolescents.

Sometimes people think because they have never received a flu shot they do not need one. Other people believe because they have already been sick with a cold, they do not need a flu shot. The fact is that it is still important to get the vaccine now. This is especially true for children, people with asthma, heart disease, diabetes, weakened immune systems, and



pregnant women, who are at particularly high risk for complications of influenza, such as pneumonia.

The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu and has been safely given to hundreds of millions of Americans over the past 50 years (Centers for Disease Control).

Infants and children up to 8 years of age receiving the flu shot for the first time may need two doses of the vaccine, administered at least four weeks apart. It is important that these children get their first dose as soon as possible to be sure they can complete both doses before the flu season begins. (American Academy of Pediatrics Gateway September 2017 Publication)

For the 2017-2018 season, manufacturers of the vaccine have projected that they will produce up to 166 million doses of flu vaccine. This year's vaccine is available only as a shot. The nasal spray is not available this year.

Children with an egg allergy can safely get the flu shot from their pediatrician



Dr. Gretchen Homan earned her medical degree from The University of Kansas School of Medicine and completed residency training in pediatrics. She is an Assistant Professor with KU Wichita Pediatrics and her area of focus is preventive medicine with special interest in immunizations. She is a board member of the Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Chair-elect for the Immunize Kansas Coalition.

,without going to an allergy specialist. Even those with a history of severe egg allergy are not likely to have a reaction to the flu vaccine. ■

Additional Information & Resources:

- Immunize Kansas Coalition
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment Immunization Program
- Preventing the Flu: Resources for Parents & Child Care Providers
- Flu: A Guide for Parents of Children and Adolescents with Chronic Health Conditions
- Influenza Immunization for All Health Care Personnel: Keep It Mandatory (AAP Policy Statement)
- Flu.gov (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- PreventChildhoodInfluenza.org (National Foundation for Infectious Diseases/ Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition)
- Flu Fighter Coloring Book (National Foundation for Infectious Diseases)
- Ready Wrigley Prepares for Flu Season: Activity Book (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- FamiliesFightingFlu.org