



Get Protected

Flu and pneumonia vaccine guidelines

It's just the flu, after all. Nothing simple bed rest and liquids can't cure, right? And pneumonia: It might take some time and antibiotics. But it, too, is treatable, right?

Not quite. There's more to it than that.

Most people do get better from the flu without problems, but the flu and pneumonia can be deadly. They both can lead to serious health problems, or can make an existing disease worse.

The flu vaccine

The flu spreads quickly. It can strike large numbers of people in a short period of time. This is why the health community urges most people to get the flu vaccine. It protects you, those you come in contact with and the community at large.

A flu vaccine may not always keep you from getting the seasonal flu, but it can make the symptoms milder and lower the risk of other health problems from the flu.

The flu vaccine comes in two forms — an injection and sometimes a nose spray. Your doctor will tell you which one is right for you. It is recommended that everyone age six months or older get the flu vaccine. But it's most important for young children, pregnant women, older adults and people who have chronic diseases or weak immune systems.

Flu viruses change quickly, so you need to get a flu vaccine every year. Developers update it to protect against new strains. It's best to get the vaccine in October or November; however, getting it in December or January will also afford protection since flu season can last as late as May.

The pneumonia vaccine

It protects against pneumococcal disease. Pneumococcus is a bacteria that can cause:

- **Pneumonia** (infection in the lungs)
- **Bacteremia** (infection in the blood)
- **Meningitis** (infection in the coverings of the brain and spinal column)

These infections are serious and can be deadly. Most at risk are infants and toddlers, adults over age 65 and people with certain medical conditions. Get the pneumonia vaccine only if your doctor recommends it.

Find out more about flu and pneumonia vaccines — get on the path to a healthier you.

Source: Healthwise, Incorporated. Available at www.healthwise.net/aetna. Accessed 1 March 2017.

Aetna® is a trademark of Aetna Inc. and is protected throughout the world by trademark registrations and treaties.

Please note that once you leave the Aetna site, either by using a link we may have provided for your convenience or by specifying your own destination, Aetna accepts no responsibility for the content, products and/or services provided at these non-Aetna locations. Aetna does not control, endorse, promote or have any affiliation with any other website. Only your doctor can diagnose, prescribe or give medical advice. Contact your doctor first with any questions or concerns regarding your health care needs. Health information programmes provide general health information and are not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a physician or other health care professional. Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change. For more information about Aetna International plans, please refer to www.aetnainternational.com.

aetna®

aetnainternational.com