

## **FLU INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES**

### **What is the Flu?**

The flu is a very contagious viral infection of the nose throat, bronchial tubes, and lungs that can make someone of any age ill. Symptoms of the flu include fever, chills, achiness, cough, and headaches. Usually people are sick for a few days but some ill or high-risk people may die from complications of the flu.

### **Who should get a flu shot?**

Any person wishing to reduce their chances of catching the flu, people who provide essential services, people who provide care or are in contact with the elderly or sick individuals. Those who are over 50, those with any serious chronic illnesses, or people with a compromised immune system should get the shot except those who are HIV positive.

### **Who should not get the flu shot?**

Anyone who is allergic to eggs or had a serious allergic reaction to the flu shot in the past, pregnant women. If someone has a fever or is ill at the time, then the shot should be postponed until the person recovers. If someone is currently receiving chemotherapy or radiation treatment then a flu shot should be given by his/her own oncologist. If someone is HIV positive then written permission by the person's physician will be needed before getting a flu shot at the worksite.

### **Can I catch the flu from a flu shot?**

The flu vaccine is made from a dead virus and therefore cannot transmit the influenza virus. Almost all people who get a flu shot have no problem. The most common side effect is some mild soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. Some people will experience a mild fever or achiness for a day or two.

### **How is the flu shot administered?**

The shot is administered in the deltoid muscle of the arm. You must read and sign a consent form prior to receiving the shot. You will be asked to stay in the area for 10 minutes to make sure you do not have an allergic reaction,

### **How long will a flu shot protect me?**

The viruses that cause the flu frequently change and the immunity from a flu shot decreases over a period of months, therefore it is necessary to get a flu shot each year. The flu vaccine is manufactured each year for strains that are most likely to occur in the United States next winter. Vaccines are 70 to 90 percent effective in preventing the illness in healthy adults. The vaccine will not protect against other illnesses that resemble the flu. It takes approximately 7-10 days after receiving a flu shot to receive immunity.

### **If I don't receive a flu shot by early December is it too late?**

It is not too late to get a flu shot if you have not caught the flu. The flu virus usually doesn't hit our area until January or later.

### **If I am pregnant should I get a flu shot?**

If you are three months or more you should get a flu shot but arrange to have it done by your own physician and not by a nurse at the workplace.

*This information sheet was prepared by Health Promotion Affiliates, a provider of corporate flu clinics. The facts came from the Massachusetts Immunization Program. If you have any additional questions, call Richard Rotondo, 781-449-2233*