

# Seasonal Flu

## What you need to know



The CDC recommends a yearly seasonal flu vaccine as an important step in protecting yourself from influenza. The 2010 -2011 flu vaccine will protect against influenza A virus, influenza B virus and the 2009 H1N1 virus. The vaccine is available as a “flu shot” or as a nasal spray. Flu can cause severe complications including pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections. The flu can also make chronic health problems worse. Each year, on average, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 people die from seasonal flu complications in the United States. The best time to get your vaccine is October or November, but getting vaccinated later in the year can still be beneficial. Flu is a serious contagious disease.

### The CDC recommends the following individuals receive seasonal flu immunizations yearly:

- Children 6 months to 19 years
- Pregnant women
- Adults 50 years and up
- Individuals with chronic medical conditions
- Residents of long term care centers or assisted living centers
- People who live with individuals of high risk category
- Health care workers
- Caregivers of children less than 5 years of age

### It is not recommended for anyone who:

- Is allergic to chicken eggs
- Has had severe reaction to influenza vaccine in past
- Has a history of Guillain-Barre’ Syndrome
- Is a child less than 6 months
- Has a moderate to severe illness with fever  
(you should wait until symptoms are gone)

**Flu Shot Side Effects:** Are mild and can include soreness, swelling or redness of arm, and fever. Side effects are usually gone in 1-2 days.

**Nasal Vaccine Side Effects:** Are runny nose, wheezing, headache, vomiting, sore throat, cough, aches, and fever. Side effects are usually gone in 1-2 days.

You can receive your influenza vaccination at flu clinics held throughout the County or from your primary care provider. If unable to leave home due to a medical condition, contact a home health care agency such as Carroll Home Care (410-871-8000) and arrange for a home visit.

**The Elder Health Leadership Team welcomes the opportunity to include this seasonal flu page in the Healthy Carroll Families distribution. Please visit [www.HealthyCarroll.org](http://www.HealthyCarroll.org) for more information.**

# Stay Well during Flu Season

## 5 Smart Habits

- 1. Keep your hands clean.** One of the best ways to stay healthy is to wash your hands properly and frequently. Washing your hands well will help protect you from all germs, including seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus. Wash hands for 15 to 20 seconds using soap and warm water. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
- 2. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.** Produce is packed with the nutrients that your immune system needs to fight viruses and bacteria of all types. Go for all types of brightly color fruits and veggies. They will have more of the disease-fighting antioxidants, like vitamin C and beta-carotene. Varieties of produce that are available and can offer health benefits include fresh, frozen, dried, canned (in juice), and 100% juice can all offer health benefits.
- 3. Drink plenty of fluids.** Water is always a refreshing choice. Tea, especially antioxidant-rich green tea, can be a nice way to warm up and stay hydrated anytime. 100% orange or other juice is also good, but don't overdo it: A small glass a day is plenty. Drinking enough fluids (6 to 8 cups a day) will help keep your mucous membranes moist and able to fight off germs.
- 4. Choose nutrient-rich snacks.** During flu season, your body needs every drop of nutrition it can get, so don't waste your calories on 'empty' snacks. Skip the chips, cookies, and colas. Feed your body well with a variety of tasty nutrient-rich items. In addition to fruits and veggies, go for sunflower seeds, nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews, etc.), low-fat yogurt, and beef jerky.
- 5. Consider a multi-vitamin/mineral supplement.** This is the right time of year for a little extra nutrition insurance, a basic vitamin/mineral pill with 100% of the Daily Value (DV) for most nutrients. Although super-expensive supplements with mega-doses are mostly a waste of your money, you may want to look for a supplement with 1000 IUs of vitamin D. While the DV is still 400 IUs, many experts are recommending an increase for optimal health and well-being.