



www.iheartflushots.com



The Mended Hearts, Inc.

Get the Facts: Protect Your Heart from the Flu

What is the flu?

Seasonal influenza, commonly known as “the flu,” is a contagious and potentially deadly infection that affects on average, five percent to 20 percent of the total U.S. population each flu season. In past years, flu and its complications have caused an average of 36,000 deaths (1990-1999) and more than 200,000 hospitalizations (1979-2001) annually. Most of these deaths occurred in people 65 years of age and older. The flu is easily passed from one person to another through the air by droplets released when an infected individual coughs or sneezes, but may also be spread by direct contact with influenza virus-contaminated surfaces.

How does the flu affect the heart?

Flu-related death is more common among individuals with heart disease than among patients with any other chronic medical condition. Persons with heart disease are at a high risk of complications from the flu. The American Heart Association (AHA) and American College of Cardiology (ACC) recommend that the more than 12 million persons in the United States with heart conditions get annual flu shots. However, according to recent CDC data, approximately 40 percent of adults living with heart disease did not receive a flu shot in 2007. Mended Hearts joins the AHA and ACC in urging people living with heart disease to get a flu shot each and every year.

Did you know?

- The flu can exacerbate heart disease conditions and can lead to conditions like viral or bacterial pneumonia that cause complications of heart disease.
- Flu vaccination can save lives: the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology have said that flu vaccination is as important as controlling cholesterol in preventing heart attacks and strokes.
- It has been estimated that flu vaccination could help prevent thousands of deaths from heart attacks and strokes each year.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination of household contacts and caregivers of persons at high risk of severe complications of flu (e.g., persons with heart disease).
- People with severe allergies to chicken eggs or who have had severe reaction (including Guillain-Barré syndrome) to flu vaccination in the past should not be vaccinated.

Can the flu be prevented?

According to the CDC, annual flu vaccination is the best way to help prevent influenza infection and its complications.