

The Company physician informs: „Influenza vaccination“

Dear employees!

The time of year is approaching fast during which infections with the influenza virus increase. Therefore it is advisable to get a flu shot.

Because there are many questions concerning influenza vaccination, I have listed some issues of importance:

„True“ influenza is an infection caused by specific aggressive viruses. (However, the term 'flu' is often used to denote any febrile respiratory illness with systemic symptoms that may be caused by a myriad of bacterial or viral agents as well as by influenza viruses.)

By approximation of the WHO 10-20% of the world population are infected



The virus is spread from person to person by sneezing, coughing or speaking via particle aerosols that can get into the respiratory tract. Larger particle aerosols drop down within 2 minutes, are glued to surfaces and dry out. Smaller ones dry in the air, float over long distances and stay infectious for hours. Dry air in heated rooms aggravates this and can thus potentially cause a flu epidemic. The virus is relatively resistant to dehydration and stays infectious for several days, especially when surrounding temperatures and humidity are low. On the contrary, viruses die faster at higher air temperature and humidity. They need living human cells for reproduction.

During a flu epidemic, disease transmission can be prevented by washing hands, employing disinfectants and by avoiding close contact with infected people.

The first symptoms of illness manifest themselves a few hours to days after infection. However, the virus can be transmitted as early as two days before the first symptoms of illness appear. Because the symptoms of disease are relatively unspecific, they can be mistaken for many other respiratory diseases.

Typical is an acute onset of symptoms, which means high body temperature, chills, headache and joint pains. Generally, the symptoms last from 7 to 14 days.

Often the main risk of influenza is not the virus itself, but the secondary infection that can follow the flu. Because the organism is already weak after fighting the influenza virus, bacteria can enter the body more easily, thus causing secondary disease. Unfortunately, to date there is no optimal treatment against the virus. Because the drugs existing today can only prevent viral reproduction, viruses which have already set hold in the body can not be inactivated or restrained from infecting further cells.

Generally, the "flu shot" is the most effective precaution. However, viruses are enormously versatile – this is why an annual renewal of the vaccination with new strains of viruses is necessary (to get the best accordance of the used viruses strains with the pathogenic viruses in circulation).

Questions:

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| The vaccination, is it dangerous? | No, apart from persons who are allergic to chicken egg white. |
| Is it a problem to get exercise after the vaccination? | No |
| Can I be vaccinated even when I'm ill? | Depends on the illness. Please consult your doctor. |
| Is the vaccination registered in my vaccination card? | No |
| Which side effects can be expected? | Because the vaccine contains no augmentable viruses but only fragments of viruses, you can not become ill. However, it is possible that a short time after vaccination the body will start defending itself against these fragments of viruses by producing antibodies, accompanied by an inflammatory response. This can lead to a skin rash at the site of injection and to general weakness some hours after vaccination. |
| Is it still possible to have the flu after the vaccination? | Yes. |
| I was vaccinated last year, am I still well protected | Yes, but it is better to get a new vaccination with the current serum, because the influenza viruses can mutate every year. |
| I am taking medicine, is this a problem? | Normally not, please consult your doctor. |