

## **FLU MIST: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE FLU SHOT by Kaye Ivanoff, R.N. SHOTS, etc**

Approximately 35,000 people die every year from influenza and its complications. Although most of these deaths are among the elderly and people with chronic health conditions, as of the 2010 flu season, the CDC now recommends flu vaccine every year for all children, teens and adults beginning at age 6 months. Although, persons with chronic health conditions, all caregivers and all pregnant women are among the groups that should take high priority in the event of a vaccine shortage, the experts agree that flu protection is something that EVERYONE should take!. Because it takes two weeks for your body to respond with immunity, you should get vaccinated every year in October or November.

For many years, the only option for protection from the flu has been the flu shot. Many children and adults have a fear of needles, and although the discomfort from the shot lasts only a few seconds, it keeps thousands of people from taking this important vaccine.

Since being first licensed for use in the U.S. in 2003, a new way of taking the flu vaccine is gaining in popularity every year! FluMist nasal spray vaccine is available for healthy children and adults ages 2 to 49. Only healthy people may take FluMist, so those with asthma, emphysema, diabetes or other long-term health problems should take the flu shot instead. FluMist should not be given to anyone who is allergic to eggs, gelatin, arginine, the antibiotic gentamicin or to people who have had a life-threatening reaction to a previous flu vaccine or to children and teens who are on aspirin therapy. Presently, it is not recommended for use in pregnant women or nursing mothers; they should receive the flu shot instead.

FluMist is more effective in preventing the flu, because it is made from weakened forms of the three live viruses used in the flu vaccine. It is very easy to take and most people have no side effects, except possibly a slight headache, runny or stuffy nose or sore throat. The nasal spray is delivered as a very fine mist sprayed into each nostril. Children and adults of all ages appreciate not having that needle-stick, and most parents appreciate the smiles and laughter that come afterward, rather than the tears and fear that often accompany the flu shot.

Children 2 to 8 years of age who have never been vaccinated against the flu should receive two full doses of FluMist nasal spray vaccine given at least 28 days apart in order to trigger their initial immune response. As with all vaccines, due to variations in each person's immune response, FluMist may not protect everyone. Please call 615-469-7413 or visit [www.SHOTSetc.com](http://www.SHOTSetc.com) for more information and visit SHOTS, etc. in Bellevue for your dose of flu vaccine today!

*This article was written by Kaye Ivanoff, RN of SHOTS, etc., a Nashville-based provider of all vaccinations needed by adolescents and adults to stay healthy for work or school requirements, world travel and everyday life. For more information about services available for companies and individuals, please call 615-469-7413 or visit [www.SHOTSetc.com](http://www.SHOTSetc.com). SHOTS, etc. is located at 7648 Hwy 70 So. Ste 15, Nashville, TN 37221.*

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