

What's new?

- ▶ Why you should get the **flu** and **pneumonia** vaccines.

Focus *On You*

Welcome to your first issue of Greenfield Health Systems **Focus On You**, a newsletter for dialysis patients. We want to share important information with you so you are informed and educated about dialysis issues. **Focus On You** will be issued three times a year. Our topic is vaccinations.

WHY GET THE INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINE?

- Influenza (flu) is a contagious disease. It is caused by the influenza virus, which can be spread by coughing, sneezing, nasal secretions or by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching your own mouth or nose.
- To avoid the spread of the flu, you should wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Who should get the flu vaccine?

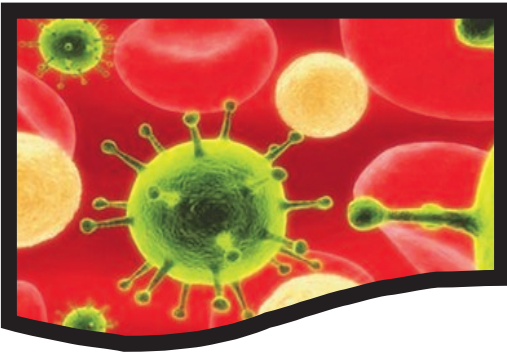
Getting the vaccine is especially important for you.

People with **kidney disease** have a weakened immune system. A weakened immune system can make you sicker because it is less able to fight off infections.

Flu can also cause higher fever, pneumonia, and make existing medical conditions worse.

By getting the flu vaccine you can protect yourself from influenza and may also avoid spreading it to others.





- Influenza viruses are always changing, so annual vaccination is recommended. It takes up to 2 weeks for protection to develop after the shot. This lasts about a year.
- The “flu shot “ is given by injection with a needle and is available and given yearly at your dialysis unit. It is covered under your insurance.

Anyone can get influenza. For most people, symptoms last only a few days. They include:

fever/chills
fatigue
cough

sore throat
headache
runny or stuffy nose

muscle aches

Other illnesses can have the same symptoms and are often mistaken for influenza.

The influenza vaccination has been proven to have an outstanding success rate and safety record. This has been shown through many years of positive results of its use.

WHY GET THE PNEUMOCOCCAL (PPSV) VACCINE?

- Pneumococcal disease (pneumonia) is caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria. It is a leading cause of vaccine-preventable illness and death in the United States. Anyone can get pneumococcal disease, but some people are at greater risk than others.
- Pneumococcal disease can lead to serious infections of the:
 - Lungs (pneumonia),
 - Blood (bacteremia), and
 - Covering of the brain (meningitis).
- Who should get the vaccine?
 - Getting the vaccine is especially important for you.
 - People with ***kidney disease*** have a long-term health problem that lowers the body’s resistance to infection.
- Most healthy adults who get the vaccine develop protection within 2 to 3 weeks of getting the shot.
- Pneumonia shots are available and given yearly for those who want them for the first time, and for those who are getting another shot five years after the first shot if recommended by their doctor.

Before you get the flu shot, tell your doctor if you have any severe (life-threatening) allergies, including a severe allergy to eggs.

A severe allergy to any vaccine component may be a reason not to get the vaccine.



To learn more, **ask your doctor** or contact the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Call 1-800-232-4636 or visit the website at www.cdc.gov/flu.

This information was obtained from:

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
Center for Disease Control and Prevention