

Wellness

Wednesday: Does the Flu Shot Give You the Flu?

“Every time you give me that ‘flu shot’ doc, I get the flu.”

I hear this often as the reason my patients want to refuse the influenza vaccine. So let me use this time and ink to set the controversy to rest. You cannot get the ‘flu’ by getting the vaccine. It is a dead virus compound that’s injected into your body. (The nasal spray was a live virus and this method is not recommended). The vaccine does not prevent you from getting the ‘flu.’ It protects you in case you are exposed to this deadly virus.

The flu season starts in early November and can go as far as May of next year. The CDC stated that from October 1, 2021 through June 11 2022, there were more than 13 million flu illnesses, 6.1 million medical office visits for influenza symptoms, 170,000 hospitalizations, and 34,000 deaths from Influenza. Did you get that? More than thirty thousand deaths due to this virus, with the majority of cases in individuals who were not immunized.

When you get the flu vaccine your body begins to produce a substances called antibodies that attack and neutralizes the virus that may be present in your body. It protects you just in case you are exposed to the virus. It usually takes about two weeks for all the antibodies to be made. Now while your body is producing these antibodies, you may not feel well for a couple of days. You may have a low grade fever, body aches and a running nose. These are the signs that your wonderful God given immune system is producing those antibodies. Again, let me repeat that this is not that you have the flu. To help alleviate these symptoms I sometimes give my patients Tylenol for three days after the injection.

According to the CDC website, the Influenza vaccine is recommended for ages six months and up. It is highly recommended if you have a compromised immune system or chronic disease like diabetes, COPD or asthma.

Now, as I said, the vaccine gives you the ability to fight off the influenza

virus if exposed but it does not protect you from getting the more than 250 other cold virus out there that can cause similar symptoms. It only protects you from the severe symptoms of influenza A and B and Swine flu. You may still get exposed and infected with the 'flu virus' by coming in contact with infected individuals in close quarters or with an article that has been contaminated by the virus. Your symptoms will be significantly reduced if you have had the antibodies in place before the exposure.

It's like this. Do you have life or home insurance? You get it "just in case," right? Similarly just in case you are exposed to the deadly flu virus you should have the immunization in place. It may save your life.

So protect your self, your family and those around you. Be a hero and get 'the shot' today.