Did you know?

While the flu can make anyone sick, people with long-term health conditions—such as asthma, diabetes (type 1 and 2) and heart disease—are at greater risk for serious complications from the flu. African Americans are more likely to live with the chronic diseases that increase the risk of flu complications leading to hospitalization and even death.

You can protect yourself and your family from the flu by getting the flu vaccine each year. The bad news is that many African Americans are not doing this.
So why are so few African Americans getting the flu vaccine? Some people may have concerns about vaccine safety. It is important to know, however, that flu vaccines (both the shot and nasal spray) have excellent safety records, and are constantly being monitored for safety. The most common side effects reported after flu vaccination are minor, and are far outweighed by the vaccine's benefits.

It's also important to know that the flu shot cannot give you the flu. Why? Because the flu shot contains killed viruses, and the nasal spray has weakened viruses that cannot cause illness. Some people do get a headache or a mild fever after getting their flu shot. This is different from the flu, it is a sign that your body is responding to the vaccine and giving you protection, these symptoms will usually subside in 1 to 2 days. Sometimes getting flu-like symptoms means that you have been exposed to the flu or another illness during the two-week period it takes the body to gain protection after vaccination. Also, because cold viruses are constantly circulating, it is possible that a person could become ill with a cold at the same time they receive the flu vaccine. Finally, the flu vaccine isn't 100% effective, so it is possible that some people will not be fully protected with the vaccine.

Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu. People with mild symptoms can still spread the flu to others. If you get sick with the flu, don't fight it out, stay home when you are sick!

To find a flu shot for you and your family visit www.mdhflu.com, click the "Find a Flu Shot Clinic" link in the right-hand column.

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