

## **DR DEC'S INFORMATION ON THE ANNUAL FLU SHOT**

### ***What is the FLU Shot?***

The "FLU" Shot is a vaccine, a small amount of a mixture of influenza viruses, that is injected into the arm muscle. The hope is that, if your body gets a small dose of the virus, it builds up immunity to the flu. In February, when the flu season is at its peak, your body will better be able to fight off a potential infection. There are several different types of flu viruses, and specific strains that cause disease, change every year. This is why the FLU Shot that you may have got last year, is not effective for this year. The flu vaccine this year, is a mixture of several different viruses, and is directed at the COMMON strains, but not ALL strains of the influenza virus.

### ***Who should get the FLU Shot?***

It is recommended for most people but especially for persons above the age of 65. It is also strongly indicated for those people under age 65 with chronic medical problems; such as asthma, heart or lung disease, diabetes, some people with poor immune systems and other chronic debilitating conditions. The FLU shot is usually safe in pregnant women, breastfeeding women and for children older than 6 months of age.

### ***Who should not get the FLU shot?***

People who should not receive the FLU shot are those people with a serious reaction or allergy to eggs/thimerosal/neomycin/ latex. Also, people with a significant reaction to a prior flu shot should not be immunized. Patients who are acutely ill with a fever should also not receive the FLU shot.

### ***Does getting the FLU Shot mean that I won't catch the Flu?***

Not necessarily. Because all the strains aren't covered in the vaccine, you may come down with a flu, that was not contained in the FLU Shot. In addition, the FLU Shot may work to decrease the severity and/or the duration of your symptoms if you get the Flu, and possibly prevent hospital admission in order to treat your Flu.

### ***Are there any side effects from the FLU Shot?***

There can be. The site of the injection can sometimes become red and painful. There is always a remote possibility of localized infection, anytime that you pierce the skin with a needle. Very rarely, someone can have an allergic reaction. Most people have no reaction at all. There is a false notion that the FLU shot CAUSES the Flu. That is FALSE! Any sickness that may arise immediately after the FLU Shot, is just a coincidence.

If you have any questions, please ask Dr. Dec or his staff.