

'Tis the Season of Giving; Give Your Kids a Flu Shot

Dear Kids-

I'm sorry to break some bad news to you. Many of you have gotten used to getting your annual flu vaccine with a little spray up your nose. I know; why can't we get all our vaccines with a spray up the old schnozzle?

Unfortunately, science has let us know that this way of protecting you hasn't worked so well for the last few years. So we're going back to our old delivery system, the shot, while we tinker with making the nose spray effective again.

This is not to say we don't have some good ways of lessening the discomfort of the shot. Ask your parents or your provider about your choices. Until then—stay healthy.

*With gentle care,
Your friends at Partners in Pediatrics*

Yes, it's true we will have a lot of disappointed patients this influenza vaccination season. But this still doesn't change the fact that at its very least influenza is a major inconvenience and at its worst deadly.

This doesn't change the fact that 83 children died last year of the flu.

This doesn't change the fact that children younger than five years of age and especially under two years of age are more at risk for hospitalization and bad side effects.

This doesn't change the fact that infants less than 6 months of age, the most vulnerable age, cannot be vaccinated and are at the mercy of their families

and caregivers who need to choose to be vaccinated and indirectly protecting our very young.

We need to be vigilant.



Partners in Pediatrics will not be giving nasal vaccine this year. Studies have shown that it has not been effective in the last few years. We are left with the injectable vaccine which has been around for decades.

We are afraid that the absence of a nasal vaccine will make families less likely to receive the vaccine. That is dangerous for all of us.

We are protected from influenza in a number of ways. The first is common sense. If we wash our hands, don't send our kids to school or day care when they are sick and avoid people who are obviously sick,

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Time To Do Some Chores

Some children may think that household chores are punishment from parents who think they are having way too much fun. But in fact, as children grow and mature, they begin to ask for and take on more and more responsibility.

As part of this maturing, parents need to provide guidelines for implementing responsibilities. Childhood chores are an important part of child development.

Given the choice, most children would opt for something that's fun: play outside, some electronics time, pick on their siblings. They are not likely to ask their parents: "Mom, Dad, is there anything I can do to help you out?"

With that in mind, we need to assign them responsibilities. When we do this, the process is not without its roadblocks. When children are young, it may be hard

for them to remember to initiate and follow through with their chores. It is up to us as parents to provide them guidance and reward to further the process.

There are some general guidelines for childhood chores:

- Be realistic with what you want them to do.
- The tasks should require age-appropriate skills and safety.
- Don't burden them with too many chores. We want our children to have realistic responsibilities but we do not want these chores to take an inappropriate amount of time or be too stressful.
- Tailor the chores for each of your children. Depending on their level of maturity and skill, children will

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Core Mores from More Chores

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be capable of different skill levels at different times of their lives.

Chores teach children responsibility. They illustrate how they can fit into a family unit. With fewer responsibilities, children miss out on learning lessons that can help them take more initiative and responsibility later in life.

The *American Academy of Pediatrics* suggests the following for those children who are slow to take on chore responsibility:

- Carefully explain what the chore is, how it will be done and what the expected result will be. A written chore chart can be helpful for this.
- Praise or thank your child for a job well done. Acknowledge successes like starting a chore without being told or doing an exemplary job.
- Routines are helpful. Encourage your children to do chores at the same time every day. This is also helpful when teaching your child organizational skills.
- Have a weekly family meeting to review how the week has gone. This would be a good time to modify any chores depending on how things are going. It also teaches children to advocate for themselves.
- Consequences for incomplete chores should be discussed in advance. They should not be inappropriate or demeaning. Part of accepting responsibility is accepting consequences when the chores are not performed appropriately. This of course teaches children that responsibilities are not to be taken lightly.

An argument could be made that our children may need chore charts until they move out of the house and go to college. It may even be argued that the willingness to accept responsibility diminishes as children age further into their teenage years.

What we do know is that children who learn responsibility early, take it into their adult years. And we, as parents, are responsible for that.

Flu Vaccine as Important as Ever Vaccinate Your Entire Family

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we can help protect everyone. If we get the flu shot, we can help protect ourselves.

The influenza vaccine is not 100 percent protective. No vaccine is. What we want to ensure is that everyone we come in contact with has also gotten the flu vaccine. In that way, we are less likely to be exposed to the flu germ. It's another level of protection.

And it doesn't have to hurt. The adage that something that is so good for us has to be painful is no longer true. Although many of our patients, especially the older ones, have no problems with shots, it is still a concern for many people.

Our *Comfort Promise* means we will do everything possible to prevent and treat pain. In the clinic it involves:

- Sugar water for infants
- Topical anesthetic cream

- Techniques to help your child to be more relaxed with immunizations
- Techniques for helping your baby with immunizations

We also have suggestions for helping your children prepare for the flu shot before they come to the clinic. More information can be obtained at:

www.childrensmn.org/services/care-specialties-departments/pain-program/childrens-comfort-promise/

This year's recommendations for who should get the flu shot have not changed:

- Everyone 6 months old or older should receive an annual influenza vaccine.
- No one should get the nasal spray vaccine.
- Influenza vaccine is encouraged as soon as possible and by the end of October if possible. However, it's never too late.

Help your children stay healthy this year. Vaccinate yourself and your children against influenza.

Partners in Pediatrics

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Appointment Hours

Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. all offices
Monday through Thursday until 8 p.m. at Maple Grove Monday and Thursday until 7 p.m. at Rogers

Pediatric Ready Care Hours — Walk-ins Welcome!

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