Flu and Pneumonia Shots Can Be Lifesavers for People with Diabetes

Contact: [Insert contact name and number here]

If you have diabetes, getting the flu or pneumonia can mean more than aches and pains. It can mean being sick longer, going to the hospital, and even dying. In fact, with diabetes, you are about three times more likely to die with flu and pneumonia than people without diabetes. During flu epidemics, you are six times more likely to go to the hospital. This risk is even higher if you have other illnesses in addition to your diabetes, such as heart disease and kidney disease.

Fortunately, there is a way for you to protect yourself from flu and pneumococcal pneumonia, the cause of the most common form of severe pneumonia. In addition to watching your diet, exercising, and making regular visits to the doctor, you can also take charge of your diabetes by getting a pneumococcal (or pneumonia) shot, and an annual flu shot.

For most people, one pneumococcal shot provides lasting protection. If you are under 65, however, you should ask your doctor about getting another shot 5—10 years after your first one. The pneumonia shot is very safe, and will also protect you against other infections caused by the same bacteria, such as blood infection and meningitis. It does not contain any live bacteria, which means there is no way to get pneumonia from the shot.

You can get the pneumonia shot any time during the year, and even at the same time as the flu shot.

The flu shot is also very safe, and you cannot get the flu from the shot since it does not contain any live virus. By chance, some people catch a cold around the time after getting the shot, but it is not from the shot. If you do get the flu even though you had the shot, the shot will still help prevent complications, and will lower your risk of hospitalization and death. The flu virus changes every year, so it is important to get a shot every year before or during flu season. Your family should also get a shot so they stay healthy and you don't catch the flu from them.

To help more people take charge of their diabetes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is launching a national campaign this fall to encourage people with diabetes to get a flu shot before flu season, and to talk to their doctor about getting a pneumonia shot. You can take charge of your diabetes by calling your doctor about these simple, safe shots. You can also find out more about diabetes and the flu by contacting CDC toll free at 1-877-CDC-DIAB or http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes. Remember, prevention is control!

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