

Many people are worried about getting a flu shot this year. It is normal to be afraid of being sick. Everyone is concerned about their health, especially when it depends on things that are beyond their control. And our fears can get worse when people repeat rumors that are not true.



### When you are worried, focus on what you CAN do

More vaccine will become available each week. If you are in one of the priority groups, be patient and check your local newspapers, your health care provider, and your local health department.

### Things you CAN DO to protect yourself and others from the flu

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw away the tissue and wash your hands with soap and water.
- If you don't have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose with your hands and then wash your hands with soap and water.
- When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or hand sanitizers.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay away from people who are sick.
- If possible, the sick person should wear a surgical mask when others are present. If the person cannot wear a mask, persons in close contact with the sick person should wear a mask. Masks should fit snugly around the face and should not be touched or handled during use. Do not share masks. Throw away used masks.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid crowded places if possible.

### Keep things in perspective

- Just because you don't get a flu shot, doesn't mean you will get the flu.
- Even if you get the flu, it doesn't mean that you will have complications.
- Those who do get the flu will get the medical attention they need.
- In the last flu season, only 44 percent of the people at greatest risk in the U.S. got flu shots
- At the peak of the flu season, only 30 percent of upper respiratory infections are from the flu. The rest are from colds and other illnesses.



## Steps for managing stress and anxiety

- Limit your exposure to news or programs that add to your fears
- Get accurate information from trustworthy sources
- Find out what the experts have to say and follow their advice
- Learn about influenza and how you can help avoid it
- Exercise, eat well and make sure you get enough rest
- Keep busy with activities and interests
- Share your feelings with family and friends
- Practice your spiritual and personal beliefs
- Keep your sense of humor

## Where to get more information

If you have further questions, call your local health department or the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services hotline at 1-866-234-0964 (this is a toll free number). If you have access to the Internet, log onto the CDC or New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services websites:

<http://www.cdc.gov> or <http://state.nj.us/health>

## Don't go it alone

The New Jersey Division of Mental Health Services operates a “warmline” to assist people with the fear and anxiety that may accompany a public health problem, a disaster or other crisis event.

Trained counselors are available by phone from 9 AM through 5 PM, Monday through Friday. Remember, you are not alone in your fear and anxiety about the flu vaccination shortage, and talking helps!

