



Are you getting a flu shot this year?

Here are some things we would like you to know

We are getting close to the end of the year that means the Saba Health Care Foundation is offering the annual influenza virus vaccination, also known as flu shot.

If you decide to have a flu shot, don't wait till there is a lot of flu around but have it now. The best time to get it is between mid-October and mid-November.

Why is the flu shot given?

About one in ten people catch flu in the winter season. In most cases it is unpleasant but clears up spontaneously. However some people can become very ill. These people are in the so called Flu Risk Group.

The Flu Risk Group:

- anyone aged 60 or over;
- people with chronic heart or lung disease;
- people with diabetes;
- people with kidney problems;
- people with reduced immunity due to a disease or medication;
- Healthcare workers and caretakers are recommended to have the annual flu shot.

Pregnant women in the risk group can still have the flu shot, it does not have a negative effect on your unborn baby.

Children in a risk group can also receive the flu shot.

If you are in a risk group and insured via Zorgverzekeringskantoor BES (ZVK), you are being offered a free flu shot at the Saba Health Care Foundation. Flu shots are also available for those who are not in the risk group and/or not insured via ZVK for a charge of \$30 USD.

Benefits of the flu shot

The flu shot reduces the risk of catching flu. It is still possible that you catch it even when you had the shot, however it is less likely and your symptoms may be milder. This is especially beneficial to those in the risk group.

How does the flu shot work?

Flu is caused by the influenza virus which can spread by coughing, sneezing or even by someone talking to you or shaking your hand. When your body is attacked by a virus it responds by making antibodies to fight it off; this is our natural immune system.

People in the risk group are less likely to make enough of these antibodies. The flu shot will stimulate your body into making antibodies and increases your resistance against the virus. It takes about two weeks after the flu shot for your antibodies to reach the right level.

The flu shot is injected into the upper arm. Please make sure that the clothes you are wearing when you come for a flu shot make it easy to expose your upper arm.

Please note that the flu shot only protects you against the influenza virus, not against other viruses such as the one that causes the common cold. You cannot get flu from a flu shot.

Does the flu shot have side-effects?

The arm in which you have the flu shot may feel tender during the coming day, and the site of the flu shot may be painful, red or swollen. You may feel unwell for a couple of days after the flu shot.

Serious side-effects are rare. If you do have serious side-effects after the flu shot, you should tell your doctor.

Why do I need a flu shot every year?

The flu shot offers protection for about half a year. This means that last year's flu shot is no longer effective.

Furthermore, the influenza virus changes regularly. Even if the flu shot is still active, it may not protect you against a new type of influenza virus. This is another reason for getting a flu shot every year. The annual flu shot protects you against the most common types of influenza virus for that winter season.

To make an appointment for your flu shot contact our clinic nurses at the A.M. Edwards Medical Center via **416-3288 option 3**.



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