

It is Up to Each of Us!

Each year at this time I am compelled to write about the upcoming flu season and the ever prevailing need to get a yearly flu shot! This year I am at a loss to know where to begin writing about shots and immunizations. I have just spent an hour watching the gruesome news about how hospital intensive care units are full and overflowing with extremely ill COVID-19 Delta Variant patients. These same institutions are currently running out of oxygen to treat these patients and the medical staffs are at the breaking point because there are no longer enough individuals to care for the sick and dying. Many individuals who are avidly opposed to taking a COVID-19 vaccine are treating themselves and becoming severely ill from a drug that is meant to treat animals that weigh 1000 pounds, have hoofs and eat hay. As of August 29, Tennessee has one of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks, higher than 45 other States with infection rates growing at 53 percent above the previous week. Today, August 30, eleven hospital CEOs have stated that 90 percent of individuals hospitalized with COVID-19 are unvaccinated. Nearly all of those patients could be safely at home with their family at the moment if they had chosen to get vaccinated.

Though I have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 to the full extent that I can be at this moment I look forward to receiving a COVID-19 booster in the near future. I know that sometime in September or October I will also get the latest flu shot. Each year I look at the evidence-based science to determine the health strategies that I need to follow to keep myself healthy and wonder what might keep others from doing the same. I have heard multiple excuses for not getting flu shots over the years and now I hear an abundance of reasons – never mind evidence-based science – for not seeking a COVID-19 vaccine.

We know that the flu and COVID-19 are not the same; however, we do know that if one is to get both at the same time, recovery would be very difficult. For that reason I have combined my plan for caring for myself for flu prevention and Covid-19 prevention!

Below is my plan for staying healthy during the ever-present pandemic and I share this plan for all today!

1. First and foremost is to get vaccinated for COVID-19 if you have not already done so. Get a flu shot before the end of October for the best protection through the flu season.
2. Wear a mask indoors and outdoors when closer than six feet to anyone other than your family group.
3. Observe social distancing to the highest regard when in places other than at home even though you have been vaccinated. This is especially needed by seniors who received early vaccinations and now may have a reduced rate of vaccine coverage and cannot yet receive the booster.
4. Be aware that anyone, vaccinated or unvaccinated, can be a carrier of COVID-19 without having any symptoms of this virus. Be respectful of others!

5. If it is not absolutely necessary, avoid places where there are crowds and be safe. Order groceries to be delivered or chose hours for grocery and other shopping when there are usually fewer individuals in the stores (the first store hour in the morning or the last hour in the evening).
6. If you travel, know that you have a responsibility for keeping others safe until you are sure that you are not serving as a COVID-19 spreader.
7. The COVID-19 vaccination is free! Treatment for this disease whether as an out-patient, in the emergency room, or especially in the ICU is very costly.
8. In the midst of all of the overwhelming information regarding COVID-19 shots, do not neglect the need for your annual flu shot. The cost of flu shots is insignificant compared to the cost of having to be treated for the flu and potentially having COVID-19 along with it.
9. Be respectful of others' opinions regarding vaccinations, masking etc., knowing that the longer it takes for everyone to get vaccinated the longer it will take for all of us to enjoy life as we did prior to the pandemic. Use opportunities for friendly discussion to share positive, science-based health information.
10. Be Safe! practice courage, hope, compassion and love!

In Christ We Worship, Love, Grow, Serve and Send!

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