Health Care Workers and Flu Vaccines

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual influenza vaccination for all health care workers (HCWs). Influenza immunization rates among HCWs must be increased. Only 36% of HCWs are immunized each year. –National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

Unvaccinated HCWs can be a key cause of outbreaks in health care settings.

Health care workers who do not get vaccinated are at risk for contracting influenza - a potentially long and serious illness, or transmitting influenza to their vulnerable patients.

Misperceptions about the flu vaccine
- The vaccine causes the flu.
- I received the flu vaccine previously but still got the flu. Therefore, the flu vaccine does not work.
- I haven’t had the flu in the past several years. Therefore, I’m not at risk for infection and illness myself, or at risk for transmitting infection to the patients in my care.
- The flu vaccine causes adverse effects.

Unvaccinated HCWs can be a key cause of outbreaks in health care settings.

There have been several documented outbreaks illustrating the problem of influenza transmission between HCWs and patients in:
- Organ transplant units
- Long-term care facilities
- Neonatal intensive care units

One reason HCWs transmit influenza is they often continue to work while infected with the virus.

