Title: Flu shots prevent COPD related illness.

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Plain Language Summary:

The flu shot prevents a spreadable illness caused by the influenza virus. The flu causes high fevers, body aches, flushed face, headache, sneezing, sore throat, runny nose, dry cough, and increased problems breathing. Millions of people get the flu every year, and thousands develop life-threatening problems because of it, including pneumonia, brain infections, and seizures. There are not good medications to treat the flu once you have it, so a shot is the best way to avoid getting the flu.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a condition that can make breathing hard. COPD can cause coughing and mucus production because the lungs do not work properly. COPD develops slowly over time and can limit your daily activity. The signs of symptoms of COPD can get worse during flare-ups. Over time the flare-ups can become severe and can lead to death. The disease does not have a cure, so preventing the disease from getting worse is important.

It is important for people who have COPD to avoid getting the flu to avoid flare-ups. Patients with COPD are more likely to have problems when they get the flu, and the flu can lead to decreased lung function in people with COPD. Doctors have studied people with COPD who get flu shots and have proven that getting a flu shot helps prevent flare-ups of COPD. The flu virus changes yearly, so people need to get shots every year. The flu shot contains killed virus, so people can not get the flu from the shot. At most some people get a low-grade fever from the shot as well as some pain at the injection site.

Additional Resources:
- MedlinePlus COPD tutorials
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Fact sheet for family members of people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Influenza vaccine

Key Words:
- Flu shot
- COPD
- Flu
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