

HEALTH ALERT!

It's Not Too Late To Get A Flu Shot! Get One Now Before Flu Season Hits In January!

(NAPSA)—You can—and should—get your flu shot before the flu season strikes. There's plenty of flu vaccine available and lots of time to be immunized before influenza raises its ugly head in January, stresses the Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA).

"We urge each of you and your family members to see a health care provider or public health department about getting immunized before flu season peaks, which typically happens between January and early March," said Gregory Poland, MD, professor of medicine and clinical pharmacology at the Mayo Clinic and Foundation, Rochester, Minn.

Influenza vaccination is recommended for anyone who wants protection from influenza and for persons 65 years of age and older, people with chronic illnesses, health care workers, some healthy children (6-23 months of age) and persons who live with or care for high-risk persons, according to recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"Each year in the United States, the flu is associated with more than 20,000 deaths, more than 114,000 hospitalizations and strikes at least 1 in every 10 adults annually," said Carolyn Markey, RN, President and CEO of VNAA. "A simple flu shot significantly reduces a person's chances of getting influenza."

The flu often strikes hard and fast normally around January, leaving many people bedridden for days, accounting for missed days at work and school in healthy

To Do List...

- Groceries
- Dry Cleaning
- Post Office
- Flu Shot 

Add a flu shot to your 'To Do' list in November, December and even later in the season.

individuals, and leading to serious complications among the elderly and chronically ill.

How Influenza Spreads

Influenza viruses are easily transmitted via droplets of respiratory secretions that can be easily spread by sneezing and coughing. The virus can also be spread by direct contact with infected persons. Persons who get the flu experience onset of high fever, chills, a dry cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat, muscle and joint pain, and extreme fatigue lasting several days to weeks.

Who Should Not Be Vaccinated

Persons who should not receive influenza vaccine are those who have had previous reactions to the vaccine or are allergic to eggs (the viruses used in the vaccine are grown in chicken eggs). Adults with a fever should wait until symptoms

disappear or consult a health care provider about receiving an influenza vaccination. However, vaccines may be given in the presence of minor illnesses with or without fever, particularly among children with mild respiratory tract infections.

About the Vaccine

Influenza vaccine is safe and effective. The most common side effect is soreness at the injection site that can last up to two days. Some people may have mild fever or feel tired for a day or two after receiving the vaccine.

Flu vaccine does not cause influenza. Manufacturers make the vaccine with inactivated or "killed" strains of the viruses predicted to be prevalent during the upcoming season, so you cannot get influenza from a flu shot. The predominant strains change annually, so last year's flu shot will not protect you from this season's virus. As with any vaccine, a flu shot may not protect 100% of susceptible individuals.

For more information on influenza vaccination, contact your physician or local healthcare provider, or visit the CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov.

Visiting Nurse Associations of America

VNAA was created in 1983 and is the official national association for freestanding, not-for-profit, community-based home health organizations known as Visiting Nurse Associations. VNAA represents nearly 200 VNAs in over 400 locations nationwide. VNAs provide more than 2.5 million influenza immunizations annually.