



# Health Bulletin



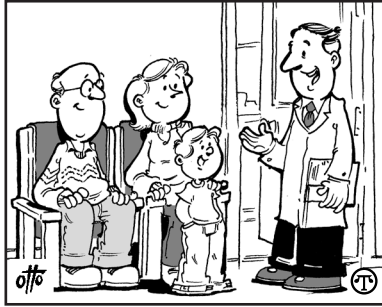
## Help Protect Yourself & Your Loved Ones From Influenza *Health Officials Urge Making an Appointment for Influenza Vaccination Now*

(NAPSA)—Did you know an annual vaccination is the best way to make sure you and your loved ones do not suffer from influenza, also called the flu, every year? Influenza is a serious disease that causes about 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 trips to the hospital each year in the U.S. In fact, certain people have a greater chance of becoming seriously ill if they catch this dangerous virus.

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) reminds Americans that they need to be vaccinated each year to have the best protection from the spread of influenza. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), immunization is important for people aged 50 years and older, anyone with a chronic illness such as asthma or diabetes, and children from 6 months up to 5 years of age.

The CDC also calls for annual vaccination for health care workers, pregnant women and anyone in close contact with someone at risk to help prevent them from catching the virus. This includes parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters and babysitters.

“Influenza is a very serious disease that can cause people to miss work and school, stay in bed for days or sometimes go to the hospital,” says NFID President Carol Baker, M.D., Baylor College of Medicine. “Getting vaccinated each year is important to help protect you and your family.”



**If anyone in your family is at risk for influenza, it may be wise to call your health care provider to schedule a vaccination.**

Anyone else who wishes to avoid getting sick from influenza should also talk to his or her health care provider about receiving a vaccination.

Influenza viruses change often. This is why a new vaccine is made each year. It is important to get immunized annually to have the best protection before the season hits.

“Immunization offers protection throughout the season, within two weeks after receiving the vaccine,” says Dr. Baker. “While the best time to get vaccinated is in the fall, immunization throughout the winter can provide protection. The influenza season every year usually does not peak until January through March.”

### **About Influenza**

Influenza is caused by a virus that infects the nose, throat and lungs. It is spread through the air by sneezing and coughing or by direct contact with people who have the disease. Symptoms

include high fever, chills, a dry cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat, muscle and joint pain, and extreme fatigue lasting several days to weeks.

### **How to Prevent & Treat Influenza**

An annual vaccination is the primary way to prevent influenza and the complications that come with the disease. Anyone with a hypersensitive reaction to eggs or who has experienced an allergic reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine or any vaccine components should not be immunized and should consult his or her health care provider about treatment options, including anti-virals.

It is important to know that children 6 months to 9 years of age getting vaccinated for the first time need two doses at least one month apart for the best protection.

Anti-viral medications can be effective for the treatment of influenza and its symptoms. Talk to your health care provider about whether treatment options are right for you.

### **For More Information**

For more information, contact your health care provider. You can also visit the CDC Web site ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) or the NFID Web site ([www.nfid.org](http://www.nfid.org)).

### **About NFID**

Founded in 1973, NFID is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public and health care professionals about the causes, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases.