

What Women Need To Know About The Flu

(NAPSA)—These days, women are taking on more responsibilities. With managing work, family and social activities, women are leading an on-the-go lifestyle and simply cannot afford to get sick. Contracting the flu could make it virtually impossible for them to get everything accomplished, which, for many women, isn't an option. Considering that every year an estimated 15 to 60 million people in the United States spend one to two weeks suffering from the flu, women should take action to help protect themselves from the flu and get vaccinated. Contrary to popular belief, the flu is not "just a bad cold" but a contagious illness that strikes quickly and can hit hard. Flu symptoms, such as severe fatigue, fever and body aches, can make it difficult to get out of bed.

Flu can infect anyone, anywhere at any time. In fact, it's possible to infect others with the flu one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick. This means that people can infect their friends, family and co-workers with the flu before realizing that they have it, or pass it along to family while they recover at home. Everyone should take the right steps to help protect themselves from the flu and help prevent its spread to family and friends—the best way to do this is to get vaccinated against the flu.

"While women are typically the



primary caretakers and often put managing the health of their family before their own, it is important for them to get vaccinated against the flu," said Elizabeth Battagliano Cahill, RN, executive vice president of the not-for-profit National Women's Health Resource Center. "By doing so, they will not only help protect themselves, but also help prevent the spread of flu to their family and those considered high risk, including young children and adults over 50."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a flu vaccination for anyone who wishes to be protected against the flu. Recently, the CDC and its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) updated their guidelines regarding the prevention and control of flu to recommend a flu vaccination for a broader range of people.

The new 2006 guidelines rec-

ommend flu vaccination for:

- All children 6* to 59 months of age
- Children aged 6 months* to 9 years who have not been previously vaccinated should receive 2 doses of vaccine
- People 50 years and older
- Women who will be pregnant during the flu season
- Any person in close contact with someone in a high-risk group, including:
 - Health care workers
 - Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children 6* to 59 months
 - Close contacts of people 50 years and older.

**Influenza vaccine is not currently indicated for children under 6 months of age.*

For More Information

To learn more about what you can do to help prevent the flu, visit the following Web sites:

- www.cdc.gov/flu
- www.healthywomen.org
- www.thefamilycaregiver.org.

Questions To Ask Your Health Care Professional:

1. Am I at risk for catching the flu and/or developing complications from the flu?
2. Should I get a flu vaccination?
3. Can I pass the flu on to others if I'm not vaccinated?
4. Should my loved one(s) get vaccinated against the flu?

