

# Health Alert!

## Actress And Mother Sarah Chalke Urges Moms To Get Their Families Vaccinated Against Influenza

(NAPSA)—Sarah Chalke isn't a doctor, but she played one on TV. Widely known for her role on the hit TV series "Scrubs," the actress and mother has joined the *Faces of Influenza* initiative to educate the public about the seriousness of influenza and the importance of immunization—for the whole family.

Sarah knows the critical role that mothers play in the health care of their families and is urging moms across the country to help protect themselves and their loved ones against the flu by getting vaccinated this and every year.

"Like all mothers, I do whatever I can to keep my child healthy, and an important part of this is having him immunized against the flu," said Ms. Chalke. "And, to make sure the people in my son's life don't spread the virus to him, my family and I have all gotten our flu shots and will continue getting immunized every year."

Vaccination is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for every-one 6 months of age and older, and is especially important for groups at higher risk of developing influenza-related complications, including people 50 years of age and older; pregnant women; people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, diabetes and others; and residents of long-term care facilities and nursing homes. The CDC



**Sarah Chalke, actress and national spokesperson for the *Faces of Influenza* campaign, received her flu shot to help protect herself and her young son, Charlie, from this serious disease.**

also recommends a yearly vaccination for those who come into close contact with high-risk groups, such as household contacts, caregivers and health care providers.

In addition, parents need to know the CDC also recommends that children ages 6 months through 8 years who are getting a flu shot for the first time receive two doses approximately one month apart for the best protection.

"I've learned everyone is at risk of contracting and spreading influenza, which can lead to severe complications...even death," said Ms. Chalke. "I'm glad to be a part of the *Faces of Influenza* campaign because I want others to know how important influenza vaccination is for their health and the health of their families."

Vaccination is safe and effective, and the best way to help prevent influenza. With vaccination options available for every age

group—children, adults and seniors—people should talk with their health care provider to find the option that's right for them and their families this season.

### About Influenza

Influenza is a serious respiratory illness. Each year in the U.S., on average, influenza and its related complications result in approximately 226,000 hospitalizations. Depending on virus severity during the influenza season, deaths can range from 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people.

Immunization to prevent influenza can begin as soon as vaccine is available in the late summer and early fall. However, for those who can't get vaccinated early in the influenza season, such as children who are not yet 6 months of age or any others who missed their annual shot, immunization through the winter and even into the spring is beneficial. In fact, as long as influenza viruses are in circulation, it's not too late to get vaccinated. This is because, in many seasons, influenza activity doesn't peak until winter or early spring. It only takes about two weeks for the vaccine to help protect against the virus.

For more information about influenza vaccination and the many "faces" of influenza, visit [www.facesofinfluenza.org](http://www.facesofinfluenza.org).

*Faces of Influenza* is an educational campaign of the American Lung Association, made possible through a collaboration with Sanofi Pasteur.