

# Health Officials Urge High-Risk Persons To Get Vaccinated For Influenza This Season

## Call Your Doctor Or Health Care Provider To Schedule An Influenza Vaccination Now

(NAPSA)—As Americans live healthier and longer lives, there is still one tool overlooked by many that may prevent an average of 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations each year. An annual influenza vaccination is beneficial to those at an increased risk for influenza and its complications, and health officials urge those groups to call their health care providers today to schedule a vaccination appointment.

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) warns that influenza is a severe and sometimes life-threatening disease and advises people, especially those at an increased risk for influenza-related complications (such as pneumonia), to be vaccinated this fall.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stresses the importance of annual influenza vaccination for all persons in high-risk groups, including adults 65 years of age and older; people living in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities; children aged 6 through 23 months; pregnant women; and persons aged 6 months and older with medical conditions (like asthma or diabetes).

“Many people don’t realize they fall into a high-risk group and need to ask their physicians for an influenza vaccination,” says William Schaffner, MD, of the NFID and Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

To increase the level of protection for persons in high-risk



groups, the CDC recommends annual vaccination for health care workers. Family members and others in close contact with all high-risk persons and with children 6 months and younger should also be immunized in order to protect high-risk groups.

Those at high risk are encouraged to receive an influenza vaccination in the beginning of October. As of early November, vaccine may be available to all who wish to reduce their risk of getting influenza and is a good idea for anyone who wants to stay healthy this season.

“Once vaccinated, you are protected within two weeks and this protection lasts throughout the season,” says Susan J. Rehm, MD, of the NFID and the Cleveland Clinic. “It is important to be immunized against influenza every year because the viruses that cause the disease often change, and a new vaccine is made before each season.”

### About Influenza

Influenza is a highly contagious viral infection of the nose,

throat and lungs that is spread through the air by sneezing and coughing or by direct contact with people who have the disease. People who get influenza experience a high fever, chills, a dry cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat, muscle and joint pain, and extreme fatigue lasting several days to weeks.

### About Influenza Vaccination

Influenza vaccine is safe and effective and is available in two forms: an injectable vaccine, approved for anyone, healthy or high-risk, 6 months or older; and a nasal vaccine for use in healthy people aged 5-49 years.

The injectable influenza vaccine should not be given to anyone who has a hypersensitive reaction to eggs or who experienced an allergic reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine or any vaccine components.

Children 6 months to 9 years of age who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time will need two doses at least one month apart for the best protection.

### For More Information

For more information about influenza and vaccination, 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 public and professional educational programs about the causes, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases.