



HEALTH ALERT

Help Protect Yourself And Your Family Against the Flu— Get Vaccinated

Olympic Champion and Mom Kristi Yamaguchi Urges Families to Protect Themselves Against Influenza

(NAPSA)—There are many “faces” of influenza—people who need to get vaccinated against influenza, also known as the “flu.” In fact, more than four out of every five people in the United States should be immunized every year. Chances are you, your friends and your relatives should make time to get vaccinated as soon as vaccine is available.

Influenza can cause you to miss work or school and thousands are hospitalized from the disease and its complications every year. Immunization is the best way to help protect against influenza. The American Lung Association wants you to make influenza vaccination a priority for you and your family.

Kristi Yamaguchi is best known as an Olympic champion and “Dancing with the Stars” winner. Her most important role is being a mom to her two young daughters and taking charge of her family’s health. That’s why Kristi makes sure her family gets vaccinated against influenza every year. She has joined the American Lung Association’s *Faces of Influenza* campaign to educate other families about the dangers of influenza and the need to be immunized each year.

“As a mother, I help protect my family every year against influenza by making sure we all get vaccinated,” said Kristi. “This includes my husband, my two daughters and even the grand-



parents in our family. Now is the time to get yourself and your loved ones vaccinated.”

Many people are recommended to get vaccinated against seasonal influenza, including: children 6 months-18 years of age; people 50 years of age and older; pregnant women; people with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease or diabetes; and people living in long-term care facilities and nursing homes, among others.

Vaccination also is important for caregivers and anyone else who is in regular contact with people in high-risk groups. Babysitters, day care providers and all health-care professionals can pass on the virus to those close to them, which can make high-risk people seriously ill. Anyone else who wishes to help prevent the virus from spreading should be

vaccinated, too. Vaccination usually takes about two weeks to provide full protection.

“Getting vaccinated will help prevent influenza from spreading in your home and infecting those close to you, like co-workers, friends and family,” said Norman Edelman, MD, Chief Medical Officer of the American Lung Association. “I urge everyone to consider influenza vaccination as a safe and effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu.”

About Influenza

Influenza is not the common cold. It’s serious. Each year, influenza-related complications lead to an average of 226,000 hospitalizations and approximately 36,000 deaths in the United States.

Influenza is caused by a virus that spreads from person to person, though sometimes people become infected by touching something contaminated with the influenza virus and then touching their mouths or noses.

Complications of influenza can include viral or bacterial pneumonia and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, congestive heart failure and diabetes. Children may experience sinus problems and ear infections.

To learn more about influenza and annual vaccination for you and your family, visit the *Faces of Influenza* Web site: www.facesofinfluenza.org.