

Health Bulletin



It's Not Too Late For The Flu Vaccine

(NAPSA)—The flu vaccine can protect you from the flu—and it's not too late to be immunized.

Each year, the flu infects 10 to 20 percent of the U.S. population, and causes nearly 115,000 people to be hospitalized. More seriously, the flu can kill—20,000 people die annually from complications of the disease. Studies show the flu vaccine is safe, and does not cause the flu. The vaccine can prevent fever, chills, fatigue, muscle aches and pains, and severe complications, such as pneumonia.

Although immunization usually begins in October, the vaccine can be given through the beginning of the new year. Typically, flu activity peaks during February, says the National Partnership for Immunization.

Who should get the vaccine? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a flu shot for anyone wanting to reduce the chance of catching the flu, particularly: adults aged 50 and older; residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities; persons with chronic heart, lung, or kidney disease, or problems with their immune system; and women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during flu season. Flu vaccine is also encouraged for children between six and 23 months of age.

CDC also recommends that people who are in close contact with high-risk individuals be



Had your flu shot yet? If not, there's still time—but don't wait until you get sick.

immunized. This includes hospital and nursing home staff, domestic caregivers and household members of those at high risk.

If you think you should get the flu vaccine, talk to your health care provider. As with any medical treatment, it's important for a physician to confirm that the vaccine is medically appropriate. Your health care provider or health clinic can provide the vaccine, and some pharmacies offer it as well. Medicare Part B covers the vaccine for those enrolled in the program.

For more information, visit www.partnersforimmunization.org or e-mail questions to npi@hmhb.org.