

Kristi Yamaguchi And Her Mom Urge Other Mothers To Get Their Families Vaccinated Against Influenza

Everyone 6 Months Of Age And Older Is Recommended For Yearly Vaccination

(NAPS)—Kristi Yamaguchi is letting mothers everywhere know how important it is to get a flu shot, and she is doing it with the help of someone special—her own mother!

Kristi and her mom, Carole Yamaguchi, have joined the *Faces of Influenza* campaign because they want other mothers to realize what they've known for years: influenza is a very serious disease that can cause hospitalization and even death to the ones they love.

Most importantly, they want families to know that the best way to help prevent influenza is by getting a flu shot for everyone 6 months of age and older.

"When I was young, my mom made sure I was vaccinated every year, especially when I was training for the Olympics," said Kristi. "Now as a mom myself, not only do I make sure my two daughters get vaccinated every year, but my husband and I, as well as our parents, also need to be protected against the flu."

Even though her kids are grown now, Carole still makes vaccination for herself a priority.

"I know my age puts me at greater risk of developing complications from the flu," said Carole. "People like me, who are over 65 years old, need to be extra careful during influenza season. Our immune system often weakens as we get older, so make sure you talk to your health care provider



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about your best options for influenza immunization."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual immunization for everyone 6 months of age and older, but vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk for developing complications from the flu, which can include hospitalization and even death.

Groups at higher risk of developing influenza-related complications include: adults 50 years of age and older; children 6 months to 18 years of age; pregnant women; anyone with chronic health conditions, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease and diabetes; and residents of long-term care facilities. The CDC 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.

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. Vaccination is safe and effective and is the best way to help prevent influenza.

You should be immunized as soon as vaccine is available in the late summer or early fall. If you didn't have a chance to get vaccinated early in the influenza season, 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" in your life visit www.facesofinfluenza.org.

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