

It's Not Too Late To Protect Yourself And Your Family From Influenza (Also Known As The Flu)!

Vaccination Through Winter Months Still Beneficial

(NAPSA)—Have you been vaccinated against influenza this year? If not, there is something important you should know. Influenza, commonly known as the flu, can be dangerous and deadly. Each year more than 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 people die from influenza-related complications.

The good news is there is still time to get vaccinated and protect yourself and your family from this serious disease.

“Many people do not realize how dangerous influenza can be, especially for those at risk for complications the flu virus may cause, such as infants, the elderly and those with medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes,” said William Schaffner, MD, of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. “Getting an influenza vaccination is the most effective way of protecting yourself and those around you, preventing hospitalization and even death.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend an annual influenza vaccination for:

- Persons 50 years of age and older.
- Infants and children ages 6-23 months.



- Those living in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season.
- People who can spread influenza to those at high risk for complications (i.e., household contacts and out-of-home caretakers of infants from 0 through 23 months of age, health care workers and family members).
- All persons with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease, or anyone with a weakened immune system (such as from HIV or cancer treatment).
- People living in dormitories or other crowded conditions.
- Children and adolescents (aged 6 months-18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Anyone wishing to protect themselves from influenza.

If you are unsure about whether or not you are at risk for

influenza-related complications, talk with your health care professional.

“Since the height of the influenza season usually occurs between January and March, there’s still time to get an influenza vaccination in December or beyond to help ensure protection against influenza, as long as vaccine is available,” said Jean Ellis, of the Visiting Nurse Associations of America, and member of the National Influenza Vaccine Summit Executive Committee.

There are two types of vaccine available, and both are safe and effective. The injectable vaccine can be used for anyone who is 6 months of age or older. Another option is a nasal spray vaccine available for use in healthy people aged 5-49 years. In addition to the vaccines, medications can be used for early treatment of influenza, as well as to prevent and control the virus when vaccination is not an option.

For more information about who is recommended for influenza vaccination or to learn about the vaccination, visit www.cdc.gov and the NFID Web site at www.nfid.org.

Contact your local health care professional to schedule an appointment for an influenza vaccination before it’s too late and influenza hits.