



## Spread The Word, Not The Flu

(NAPSA)—Here's good news about health: Flu vaccines are already available at doctor's offices, retail stores, pharmacies and flu clinics. In fact, Sanofi Pasteur, the largest provider of influenza vaccine to the U.S., sent its first vaccine shipment last month.

You hear it all the time: "It's just the flu." But the flu can take on a serious and potentially life-threatening meaning, especially for vulnerable populations, including the elderly, young children and those with compromised immune systems.<sup>1</sup> In the spirit of National Immunization Awareness Month, let's look at how flu impacts the U.S. and why it's important to help protect yourself and those around you by getting immunized annually.

The flu shouldn't be taken lightly. Influenza, combined with pneumonia, is one of the top 10 leading causes of death in older adults, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).<sup>2</sup> Every 4 minutes, someone 65 years of age and older is hospitalized due to the flu or flu-related complications, and every 12 minutes, someone dies from complications related to the flu, adds the CDC.<sup>2,3</sup> During the 2015–2016 influenza season, 1.7 million estimated illnesses and 153,349 hospitalizations occurred among adults age 65 years and older.

The flu also causes more hospitalizations among young children than any other vaccine-preventable disease.<sup>4</sup> Since 2010, flu-related hospitalizations among children younger than 5 years old ranged from 7,000 to 26,000 per season.<sup>5</sup> Although the flu is especially harmful in these vulnerable populations, it can impact everyone. Even as a healthy adult, it is important to help protect yourself from this potentially debilitating disease.

The single best way to help prevent influenza is to get an annual vaccination, which can help reduce the risk of getting sick with seasonal flu and



### The best way to help protect yourself from the flu is to get an annual flu vaccination.

spreading it to others.<sup>1</sup> Certain vaccines are developed specifically to address the age-related weakening of the immune system, so adults ages 65 years and older should talk to their doctors about flu vaccines available for them.

Even though seasonal influenza activity typically occurs between October and May, the CDC recommends that people get vaccinated before influenza begins spreading in their community. This is important because it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that help protect against influenza.<sup>6</sup>

This flu season, spread the word about the impact of the flu and the importance of annual vaccination. You can learn more about influenza at <http://sanofipasteurus.mediaroom.com/influenza-press-kit> and find out how to inform others on the importance of vaccination at [www.nphic.org/niam-10things](http://www.nphic.org/niam-10things).

Remember, vaccination remains the best method to help prevent influenza and its potentially severe complications, and it is one of the most important things you can do to help prevent the spread of this potentially life-threatening illness to friends and loved ones.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Key Facts About Influenza (Flu). <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>. Accessed on August 7, 2017.

<sup>2</sup>CDC. National Vital Statistics Report. Deaths: Final Data for 2014. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65\\_04.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65_04.pdf). Accessed August 7, 2017.

<sup>3</sup>CDC. Estimated Influenza Illnesses, Medical Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths Averted by Vaccination in the United States. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/2015-16.htm>. Accessed August 7, 2017.

<sup>4</sup>CDC. Information for Schools & Childcare Providers. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/>. Accessed on August 7, 2017.

<sup>5</sup>CDC. Children, the Flu, and the Flu Vaccine. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm>. Accessed on August 7, 2017.

<sup>6</sup>CDC. Key Facts About Seasonal Flu Vaccine. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>. Accessed August 7, 2017