

The Flu: Do You Know When You Have It?

(NAPSA)—Is it a cold or is it the flu? With influenza responsible for approximately 114,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths each year, it's more important than ever to know the answer to that question. Experts are now predicting that this year's flu season will be severe.

With a shortage of flu vaccine this year, people should be especially aware of the symptoms. Flu symptoms include headache, chills, dry cough, body aches, fever, stuffy nose and sore throat.

Call your doctor if you have any signs of flu and:

- Your fever lasts; you may have a more serious infection
- You have breathing or heart problems or other serious health problems
- You are taking drugs to fight cancer or other drugs that weaken your body's natural defenses against illness
- You feel sick and don't seem to be getting better
- You have a cough that begins to produce phlegm
- You are worried about your health.

Doctors have flu tests available that can provide an answer in about 15 minutes, so that patients can know before they leave the doctor's office if they have the flu or not. One of these rapid tests, the FLU OIA™ prod-



Doctors now have a test available that can determine in 15 minutes if you have the flu.

uct from Thermo Electron, has shown performance equivalent to a traditional 14-day viral culture. Dan Smink, the product manager from Thermo Electron, says, "Using a rapid test is great for patients because they can get the appropriate treatment right away and get well sooner."

Benefits of taking the test may include:

- It can reduce cost and eliminate unnecessary diagnostics.
- It will allow the physician to prescribe appropriate antiviral medication sooner.
- It reduces unnecessary use of antibiotics.
- It assists in the surveillance of influenza A and influenza B.

To learn more about the new test, see your doctor or visit the Web site www.thermo.com/flu.