

Health and Welfare Alert

Preventing the Flu #31-11-13



Purpose

The purpose of this Alert is to encourage all individuals and caregivers to be vaccinated for the flu. The single best way to protect against the Flu is to get vaccinated each fall. Note: The flu season can start as soon as early October, so vaccinations should occur as soon as possible. Routine annual vaccination is recommended for all persons 6 months and older.

All DD Employees are required to be trained, annually, on identification and reporting of Major Unusual Incidents and Unusual Incidents prior to unsupervised contact. This training includes the review of any **Health and Welfare Alerts** released since the previous calendar year's training.

For questions / comments, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Time is here! The seasonal influenza vaccine is formulated to protect against the three or four strains of flu that public health researchers believe will be the most common during the upcoming season.

The 2013-2014 U.S. Trivalent Vaccine contains:

- A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like virus;
- B/Massachusetts 2/2012

There is a vaccine that addresses a 4th flu-Quadrivalent B/Brisbane /60/2008

A variety of influenza vaccine products are available this year. For many recipients more than one brand may be appropriate. If you have questions, check with your doctor.

Children aged six months through eight years are recommended for two doses. *Ask your doctor.*

Persons, who live with or care for others, at high risk of flu-related complications, should be vaccinated if possible. This includes household contacts and caregivers of children aged ≤ 59 months and adults ≥ 50 years. Also, healthcare personnel should be vaccinated, if possible.

People at High Risk for Developing Flu-Related Complications:

- People age 50 years and older;
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities that house those with long-term illnesses;
- All children six to 59 months of age;
- Immunosuppressed persons (HIV and/or by medications)
- People with any condition that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions (that is, a condition that makes it hard to breathe or swallow, such as brain injury or disease, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other nerve or muscle disorders.)
- Pregnant women
- American Indians and Alaskan Natives

Who Should Not be Vaccinated?

There are some people who should not be vaccinated without first consulting a physician. These include:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs. If a person reports egg allergy, check with a doctor as there are new vaccines this year. The doctor can evaluate needs.
- People with history of service allergy ID; any component of vaccine, gentamycin, gelatin, arginine.
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past.
- People who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of getting an influenza vaccine previously.
- Influenza vaccine is not approved for use in children less than six months.
- People who have a moderate or severe illness with a fever. Wait to get vaccinated until symptoms lessen.
- Adults and children six months and older with chronic heart or lung conditions, including asthma.

Note: Consult your doctor before receiving the LAIV, Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine



Vaccine Side Effects

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever (low grade)
- Aches

If these problems occur, they begin soon after the shot and usually last one or two days. Most people who receive influenza vaccine have no serious problems from it. However, on rare occasions, flu vaccination can cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions.

Good health habits are also an important way to help prevent the flu.

It is important for staff to model these behaviors and to teach, encourage and assist with these practices routinely.

1. **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too
2. **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness
3. **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cough or sneeze on your sleeve to avoid spreading viruses by your hands and in the air.
4. **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you from germ
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

If you get the flu, antiviral drugs are a treatment option. Check with your doctor promptly if you have a high risk condition and you get flu symptoms. Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Your doctor may prescribe drugs to treat your flu illness.

More Info:

If you do not have a personal physician, local Health Departments often offer flu shots at a reasonable cost. When obtaining your annual flu vaccine, ask your physician if you qualify for the pneumonia vaccine also. Many local pharmacies also offer convenient reasonably priced flu shots and will process payment through your insurance if available.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

For Questions or Comments

For questions or comments regarding this alert, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit.

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