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HEALTH ALERT

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2015-2016 Flu Season Alert

The Office of Developmental Programs is sending out this mid-flu season reminder to get immunized against the flu. Due to the warmer weather in the early part of this year's flu season, some may have put off this life-saving action.

What do I need to know for the 2015-2016 flu season?

Get immunized against the flu annually.

The CDC still recommends those aged 6 months and older get a flu shot each year. However, it is especially important that some people who are at risk for complications to especially get immunized. These include:

- People who have certain medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease, heart disease, blood disorders, endocrine disorders, kidney disorders, metabolic disorders, liver disorders, and morbid obesity
- Pregnant women
- People 65 years and older
- People who have a weakened immune system
- People who live with or care for others who are at high risk of developing serious complications

Do I need a flu vaccine every year?

Yes. A flu vaccine is needed every year because flu viruses are constantly changing. The flu vaccine is formulated each year to keep up with the flu viruses as they change. There are different types of vaccine available and your healthcare provider can recommend what is best.

Also, multiple studies have shown that the body's immunity to influenza viruses (acquired either through natural infection or vaccination) declines over time.

Is there treatment if I get sick with the flu?

Yes. If you get sick, there are drugs that can treat flu illness. They are called antiviral drugs and they can make your illness milder and help you feel better faster. They also can prevent serious flu-related complications, like pneumonia.

Can I do anything else to help prevent the flu?

Yes. In addition to getting the flu vaccine, you can help prevent the spread of influenza. You can practice good personal hygiene: wash your hands frequently, cough or sneeze into your elbow and stay away from people if you or they are ill.

Do I have the flu or a cold?

The flu and the common cold have similar symptoms. Symptoms such as fever, body aches, tiredness, and cough are more common and intense with the flu. Flu symptoms include:

- A 100° F or higher fever or feeling feverish (not everyone with the flu has a fever)
- A cough and/or sore throat
- A runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches and/or body aches
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea (most common in children)

If these symptoms are present, contact the primary care provider to determine the best course of treatment.



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Where can I get more information about flu?

The CDC has a wealth of information about flu and preventing flu. Their website, listed below, contains posters and fact sheets that you can use to spread the word about preventing flu. For information about where to get a flu shot, you can contact your Primary Care Physician or your local Department of Health regional office. Many pharmacies give flu shots for a small cost, but find out first if your health insurance will cover it. The website below has a flu vaccine finder...simply enter your zip code to find a flu vaccine location near you.

Resources

<http://www.flu.gov>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu>