



NEWS RELEASE

EUROPE REGIONAL MEDICAL COMMAND

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Seasonal Flu vaccine shipping to Army clinics now No waiting for Family members this year

HEIDELBERG, Germany – Seasonal influenza vaccine has arrived in Europe and is being distributed to Army medical clinics throughout Europe, according to Col. Theresa Moser, chief of the Force Health Protection Office, Europe Regional Medical Command. She has oversight of this year’s immunization program.

“We expect no vaccine shortages,” said Moser. “We can begin immunizing everyone in our population now – no one should wait.”

She said it takes about two weeks for your body to build immunity to the virus, so sooner is better than later.

Plans to immunize beneficiaries in an effort to minimize the effects of influenza during the coming months have been finalized. Clinic commanders have been charged with making early efforts to vaccinate all active-duty and civilian health care providers. Family members and other beneficiaries can get their shot now.

This year’s goal is to immunize 95 percent of the Active Duty population and all civilian direct health care providers by Dec. 1, a month earlier than last year’s goal. One reason for this earlier date is to be ready to begin a novel H1N1 immunization program if and when the vaccine is available to DoD. That vaccine is undergoing clinical trials in the United States and is expected to be available in mid-October, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

FluMist®, nasal spray vaccine, is again recommended this year for most people aged 2-49. For those who should not receive the nasal mist, other forms of vaccination will be offered. The type of vaccine an individual receives will depend on age and contributing health factors, such as pregnancy or pre-existing medical conditions, says Col. Evelyn Barraza, ERMC’s preventive medicine consultant.

The CDC publishes guidelines for influenza vaccinations, and the Army will follow those guidelines in its annual campaign. For more general information on influenza and the benefits of

receiving the annual vaccination, visit their web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>.

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Members of the active force can expect to receive information about seasonal flu vaccinations from their units. Other beneficiaries should watch for announcements about local vaccination programs in their garrison newspapers and local AFN affiliates in the coming weeks, or contact their clinic for instructions.