



It is that time of year again: *Flu Season* Time to get your vaccination!

Each year approximately 226,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations occur in the United States and as many as 36,000 people die from influenza or its severe complications. Immunization remains the primary method for preventing influenza and its severe complications. The Naval Health Research Center data from 2006-2007 showed influenza immunization to be 91% effective in preventing influenza in those immunized. National Influenza Immunization Week is scheduled for 26 November through 1 December and we would like to take this opportunity to enhance community awareness and maximize immunization rates.

WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED?

In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting the flu should get vaccinated. If you are in one of the high risk categories listed below we strongly encourage you to get a flu vaccination.

WHO IS AT RISK?

- Children aged 6 months until their 5th birthday
- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long term care facilities

There is another reason to encourage influenza vaccination at this time – Avian or Bird Flu. This highly lethal form of flu is currently restricted to wild birds with occasional outbreaks in domestic fowl and even a number of human cases in those handling fowl. So far, there has been no significant “jump” into human populations. However, it is possible for such a cross over if genetic recombination with other forms of common influenza occur, so reducing the incidence of common influenza may help avoid the Bird Flu from crossing over into humans.

Below are links that provide more information about influenza and vaccination:

<http://www.tricare.mil/pressroom/news.aspx?fid=332> – Tricare news update

<https://www.healthwise.net/tol/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=tb1913&SECHWID=tb1913-Intro>

Tricare Online resource about flu vaccine.

www.vaccines.mil/influenza

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm> - Center for Disease Control's key facts about seasonal flu vaccine.

Please contact your local remote area POC or ISOS at 65-6-338-9277 to assist in finding the nearest qualified provider for your influenza vaccination needs. As always, we are interested in your feedback and what health care issues you would like our office to address in the future. Contact us at TPHI@med.navy.mil.

Sincerely,

Dr. James A. Marron, CAPT, USN
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