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HEALTH OFFICIALS RECOMMEND FLU VACCINE FOR EVERYONE SIX MONTHS OF AGE AND OLDER

FLU IS NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY; IT'S TIME TO GET VACCINATED - NOW!

STOCKTON, CA (October 19, 2015) — Each year in the United States, people with flu are hospitalized and many die. Up to 430,000 people may be hospitalized and up to 49,000 people may die with flu in the United States this flu season. Flu vaccination can reduce the risk of serious flu outcomes, like being hospitalized.

Everyone six months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every season. Vaccination to prevent influenza is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications, including pregnant women, children younger than five, adults 65 years of age and older, and people of any age who have underlying medical conditions.

Pregnant Women: Flu is more likely to cause severe illness in pregnant women. This is because of changes in the immune system, heart, and lungs during pregnancy. Pregnant women with flu also have a greater chance for serious problems for their unborn baby, including premature labor and delivery. The flu shot given during pregnancy has been shown to protect both the mother and her baby (up to six months old) from flu.

Children: It is estimated that each year in the United States, there are more than 20,000 children younger than five years old who are hospitalized due to flu. Even children in this age group who are otherwise healthy are at risk simply because of their age. A recent study showed that flu vaccine reduced children's risk of flu-related pediatric intensive care unit admission by 74% during flu seasons from 2010-2012. To protect their health, all children six months and older should be vaccinated against the flu each year. Vaccinating their families and other caregivers can also help protect children.

Adults 65 years and older: People 65 years of age and older are at greater risk of serious complications from the flu because immune defenses become weaker with age. In recent years, it's estimated that 80% - 90% of seasonal flu-related deaths and 50% - 70% of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations have occurred in people 65 years and older. One recent study showed that flu vaccination was associated with a 77% reduction in flu-related hospitalizations among older adults.

People with underlying medical conditions: The flu can cause more severe disease in people with underlying medical conditions and can make chronic health problems worse. Vaccination was associated with lower rates of some cardiac events among people with heart disease, especially among those who had had a cardiac event in the past year. Flu vaccination has also been shown to

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be associated with reduced hospitalizations among people with diabetes (79%) and chronic lung disease (52%).

Flu vaccine is safe and effective. It takes about two weeks to develop immunity to flu after vaccination, so don't wait. The time to get vaccinated is now.

To get flu vaccine, first check with your healthcare provider. If you cannot get flu vaccine from your healthcare provider or you do not have one, find a location near you by typing your zip code into the "Flu Vaccine Finder" at <http://flushot.healthmap.org>.

For more information about seasonal influenza and the benefits of vaccination, visit the following websites:

- San Joaquin County Public Health Services, www.sjcphs.org
- California Department of Public Health Immunization Branch, [www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza\(Flu\).aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza(Flu).aspx)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/flu

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