



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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County health departments offer influenza immunization to the general public

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County health departments in Alabama began administering influenza vaccine to anyone wishing to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill from flu on Nov. 1, regardless of risk status. The shots will be given through the end of influenza season while supplies last.

"Influenza vaccine is the best way to prevent infection from the flu virus and the complications associated with it," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "Persons must be re-vaccinated each year because the flu viruses change every year. Because of staggered shipping methods used by the manufacturer, health department clinics have run out of vaccine numerous times. We anticipate a total of 16,870 doses to be delivered to county health clinics statewide this week. Late in November we anticipate receiving additional flu vaccine which will probably be administered in clinics in December. The month of December is not too late to be vaccinated to be protected during the peak months of influenza."

Immunization rates for influenza remain low, and illness and death from the disease remain high. Most people who die from influenza are 65 years old and older. Children younger than 2 are as likely to be hospitalized as those age 65 and above. It takes about two weeks after getting the flu shot for the vaccine to offer maximum protection.

The components of the vaccine for the 2005-06 influenza year include A/ New Caledonia (H1N1), A/California (H3N2) and B/Shanghai antigens. Manufacturers providing inactivated influenza vaccine to the U.S. population this season are sanofi pasteur, Inc.; Chiron Corporation; and GlaxoSmithKline, Inc.

Contact your health care provider or county health department for more information. An updated schedule of influenza clinics to be held in county health departments can be found on the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at www.adph.org/immunization, or by calling your county health department.

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