



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Health departments expect ample supply of flu vaccine, so get immunized FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Influenza immunization clinics are scheduled throughout the state beginning in October. County health departments and other health care providers in Alabama expect to have an ample supply of influenza vaccine for the 2008-2009 season.

Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for most people, beginning for children at age 6 months, to protect against outbreaks which generally occur from November to March in Alabama.

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that each year in the U.S. between 5 and 20 percent of the population is infected with influenza, about 36,000 people die and more than 200,000 are hospitalized because of influenza complications,” said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. “Contact your physician or local health department and be immunized to protect yourself and others.”

The CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination for the following persons:

- * Children aged 6 months through 18 years, including those on long-term aspirin therapy
- * Adults aged 50 years and older
- * Adults and children with chronic disorders
- * Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- * Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- * Persons who are immunosuppressed
- * Health-care workers
- * Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged 0-59 months and adults ages 50 and older
- * Anyone else who wishes to reduce the chance of contracting influenza

Typical symptoms of the flu include fever and respiratory symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches, and often extreme fatigue. The public is also reminded to follow basic infection control measures to help prevent the spread of the flu. These include covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or cloth when coughing and sneezing, staying at home when sick, and washing hands frequently.

Contact your private physician or your local county health department for a schedule of flu clinics. For more information contact the Immunization Division at (334) 206-5023 or toll free at 800-469-4599.

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10/16/08