



## CHCHD News

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

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### **Health Department Seasonal Flu Vaccination Clinics Begin October 3rd**

Chattanooga, TN- The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department will begin making appointments for seasonal flu vaccinations September 28. Beginning October 3, flu vaccine will be offered in the Health Department's Third Street, Ooltewah, Sequoyah and Birchwood clinics.

Residents can schedule flu vaccination appointments by calling one of the following locations between 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- Third Street Facility – 209-8050
- Ooltewah Health Center – 238-4269
- Sequoyah Health Center – 842-3031
- Birchwood Health Center – 961-0446

"We are excited that it is easier than ever for anyone over 6 months of age to receive influenza vaccine, regardless of risk group," said Tammy Burke, director of clinical services at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. "There are no priorities given to certain high risk or age groups as there have been in recent years. There is ample supply of vaccine and multiple locations in the community where a person can get flu vaccine," Burke added.

The CDC recommends annual flu vaccine for everyone age 6 months and older to reduce their risk of getting the flu. It is also important for the public to understand that some people are at a high risk of developing serious complications from seasonal flu. The CDC urges those at high risk and those who live with or care for someone at high risk for serious complications to get vaccinated.

The following people should get seasonal flu vaccinations each year:

**1. Anyone 6 months of age and older who wants to reduce their risk of becoming ill with seasonal influenza.**

**2. People at high risk for complications from the flu, including:**

- Children aged 6 months until their 5th birthday
- Pregnant women or women who will become pregnant during the influenza season
- 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
- People who are morbidly obese (BMI  $\geq$  40)

### 3. People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:

- Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu (see above)
- Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)
- Healthcare workers

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against three influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. The viruses in the vaccine are based on the predominantly circulating flu viruses from the previous flu season. The [2011-2012 flu vaccine](#) will protect against 2009 H1N1, and two other influenza viruses (an H3N2 virus and an influenza B virus). It takes two to four weeks after the vaccination for protective antibodies to develop. Because immunity wanes over time, annual vaccination is necessary, regardless of which strains are in any given year's vaccine.

The Health Department offers the vaccine as an injection (shot) or nasal mist (FluMist™). The flu shot is approved for people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions. As an alternative to the flu shot, healthy, non-pregnant, people ages 2 to 49 years may choose the nasal spray vaccine, FluMist™.

The cost of the flu shot or nasal spray vaccine is \$32. Pneumonia vaccine will also be available for \$68. Flu and pneumonia vaccines combined are \$80. The Health Department accepts Medicare Part B, Blue Advantage, Railroad Medicare, TennCare, cash, or check.

The flu, or influenza, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus that can be spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Flu symptoms typically include: fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches, and extreme tiredness. For most people, the flu lasts only a few days, but some people can become very ill. The flu can lead to pneumonia, and can be dangerous for people with heart or breathing conditions.

Flu season is unpredictable and it can be severe. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, estimates of flu-associated annual deaths in the United States ranged from a low of approximately 3,000 people to a high of approximately 49,000 people.

Persons sick with the flu should stay home; wash their hands frequently; cover their noses or mouths when coughing or sneezing; and drink plenty of fluids. They can also contact their doctor, who may prescribe antiviral drugs that can help reduce the time it takes for symptoms to improve.

"We encourage everyone who can be vaccinated to do so, because it is the single best way to protect yourself against the flu," said Burke. "You should also get vaccinated to protect the people you care about, especially if you have contact with infants, young children, the elderly, or someone with chronic illness."

For more information, visit our website <http://health.hamiltontn.org/>.

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