

Important Information About the 2004-2005 Influenza Vaccine

As you are probably aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced that the US will have approximately half of the expected supply of flu vaccine for the 2004-05 influenza season.

With limited supplies, who should get the vaccine this year?

To help our country cope with the severe unexpected shortage, and ensure the vaccine is available to those who are at highest risk for complications and death from the flu, FOH health centers will comply with the revised recommendations published by the CDC and will provide influenza immunizations for priority groups only. In our work-based setting, these are limited to:

- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Persons with underlying chronic medical conditions such diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS and other chronic lung, heart, liver or kidney diseases
- Women who are or plan to be pregnant during the flu season (November through March)
- Household contacts of children aged <6 months.
- Healthcare workers who provide direct patient care

What should I do if I am not in a high-risk group but want to get the flu shot?

If you are not in any category listed above, please help us ensure that the vaccine is available to those who need it most and forgo or defer vaccination this year. Other non-vaccine ways to prevent the flu can be obtained at the link below.

What if I am in the military, law enforcement or an emergency/disaster relief worker?

Unless and until we hear from the CDC or other public health authorities, only those in high-risk groups listed above will be offered vaccination by FOH providers.

Will FOH have enough vaccine for my agency?

While many agencies received their normal supply, others have received none, and we are working diligently to redistribute these equitably. Although our total supply will be reduced as a result of reallocation, FOH expects to have enough vaccine to cover those in the high-risk groups listed above.

When can I get my flu shot?

Remember, the optimal time for flu vaccination is October and November, and may continue into December. Once we finalize implementation plans including developing necessary protocols and screening forms to ensure coverage for high-risk federal employees, FOH will begin to give flu shots. We anticipate this to be in late October or early November. FOH health centers will publicize the dates as soon as they are available.

Learn more! For additional information on the flu, priority groups and flu prevention, go to the following links or contact your health center nurse:

What you should know about the flu: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>
Who should get the flu shot: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldget.htm>
Other ways to prevent the flu: http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm



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