

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about the Flu Shot

The influenza (flu) vaccine for the 2015-1016 flu season is now available in pharmacies and can be administered by a pharmacist without a prescription to anyone over 17. Frequent questions about the flu vaccine include:

I'm a strong, healthy person, why should I get the flu shot? Healthy young people who get influenza can be so sick they miss up to 2 weeks of work. In 2010 alone, influenza cost the US economy somewhere between 28-29 billion dollars.ⁱ If you're not worried about yourself, get vaccinated and protect vulnerable individuals you come in contact with (like children or older adults) from what can be a deadly illness to them!

Do I need to wait a full year since I got the last flu shot? No! You can get this year's vaccine as soon as you like.

Can I get the flu from the flu shot? No, the flu shot is composed of 'dead' virus particles that cannot infect you. However, the shot takes about 2 weeks to protect you, so if you wait until those around you have the flu, you may catch the live virus before the protection kicks in.

Since I'm over 65, should I get the high-dose vaccine? What's the difference? As you age, your immune system becomes less active and it takes a greater amount of vaccine to illicit the same response. The high dose vaccine is 24.2% more effective in older adults,ⁱⁱ but it also has a higher incidence of side effects.

What's the difference between a trivalent and a quadrivalent vaccine? Simply put, the trivalent vaccine protects against 3 strains of the flu virus and the quadrivalent protects against 4. There are literally thousands of flu viruses circulating in the world, but scientists choose the most likely strains to cause an epidemic in the next season and target those with vaccines. Both vaccines

contain the most likely flu strains that you'll encounter this winter; they are equally recommended by the CDC.ⁱⁱⁱ

What's the difference between the shot and the nasal vaccine? The nasal vaccine is a live but severely weakened virus - so it has a few more restrictions than the shot (including not being recommended for pregnant women).

Eat healthily and exercise this coming winter to stave off all sorts of viruses! This is a simplified public service announcement; for more information on the flu shot, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

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The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

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ⁱ Mao L. Annual economic impacts of seasonal influenza on US counties: Spatial heterogeneity and patterns. International J. Health Geographics. 2012; **11**:16 doi:10.1186/1476-072X-11-16.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fluzone High-Dose Seasonal Influenza Vaccine http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/qa_fluzone.html (19 August 2015).

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/quadrivalent.htm> (19 August 2015).