

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Flu Vaccine

Updates for the 2016-2017 Season

The incidence of influenza (flu) rises each year as the fall season approaches. The flu can cause mild to severe illness and is very contagious. Prevention is the most important step to take in managing the flu and protecting yourself. The flu virus changes every year, which is why a yearly vaccine is recommended. The optimal time to get your flu vaccine is by the end of October, and your pharmacist can vaccinate you at many of your local pharmacies. If you miss the optimal time to get your shot it is not too late! It is still recommended to get the influenza vaccine up until the vaccine for the next flu season comes out.

Many patients do not know that there are many types of approved influenza vaccines, but speaking with your pharmacist can inform you of the options available. The flu vaccine defends your body against many different strains of the influenza virus including influenza A and one or two of the influenza B viruses depending on which vaccine you receive. The trivalent vaccine protects against both A strains of influenza and one B strain. The quadrivalent vaccine protects against both A strains and two B strains of the influenza virus. The strains covered vary from year to year based on the most prevalent influenza strains at the time.

For the 2016-2017 flu season, the inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV) and the recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV) are recommended. However, the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), also known as the nasal spray vaccine, is not recommended for the upcoming flu season to any patient population. This recommendation is a first for the live attenuated vaccine. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) decided this in June of 2016. This vote comes after data showed that the nasal spray vaccine was very ineffective for the 2015-2016 flu season. Final recommendations will be

posted in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

Patients need to be aware of these new recommendations in order to be sure he/she is being adequately immunized. It takes about two weeks for the body to build an adequate immune response to the influenza virus after administration of the vaccine. Due to this delayed response, it is still possible to get the flu during this time frame; however, the actual vaccine will not give you the flu. Keep this in mind when thinking about getting your shot. The flu vaccine is recommended for all patients older than 6 months without any contraindications. If a patient has any concerns about vaccine recommendations, a pharmacist is an easily accessible source for all questions related to vaccinations.

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldvax.htm>

<http://www.vaccines.gov/diseases/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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