

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about The Annual Flu Vaccine

It's almost that time of year again. Time to get the annual flu shot. It is critical for everyone to take responsibility of their own health and receive their flu shot once a year to ensure adequate protection from the virus. Everyone can receive his or her vaccine as early as it's available for the new upcoming flu season. September or October is the earliest our local health care providers obtain the vaccine for distribution. It's also never too late to receive your vaccine. The flu season peaks in February, according to the CDC, so even receiving one of the last available shots of the season in January is helping to reduce your chances of catching the flu.

When receiving the flu shot, there are certain populations who should and should not receive the vaccine. Everyone who is at least 6 months of age should get the flu shot. It's especially important for people to receive the vaccine if they are at a higher risk for developing serious complications if they caught the flu. This includes women who are pregnant, people who have asthma, diabetes, or chronic lung disease, people younger than 5 years of age, and people older than 65 years of age. It is also important for people who live with or care for others who are at a high risk of developing serious complications to the flu. This includes household contacts and caregivers of people with serious medical conditions, caregivers of infants younger than 6 months old, and all health care providers. Children younger than 6 months of age should not receive the flu vaccine. Also people with severe egg allergies should not receive the flu vaccine.

There are several different flu vaccine options for the upcoming season. Normal flu vaccines are made to protect against three different flu viruses, these are called trivalent vaccines. There are also vaccines to protect against four different flu viruses, and these are called quadrivalent vaccines.

The trivalent flu vaccine protects against two influenza A viruses and one influenza B virus. The options for trivalent include:

- Standard dose trivalent shot – approved for ages 6 months and older
- Intradermal trivalent shot – approved for ages 18 through 64 years
- High-dose trivalent shot – approved for ages 65 and older

- Trivalent shot containing virus grown in cell culture – approved for ages 18 and older
- Egg-free trivalent shot – approved for ages 18 through 49 years

The quadrivalent flu vaccine protects against two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses. The options for quadrivalent vaccines include:

- Standard dose quadrivalent shot – approved for ages 6 months and older
- Standard dose quadrivalent nasal spray – approved for healthy people ages 2 through 49 years of age

The nasal spray has shown to be more effective in healthy children ages 2 through 8 years who have no contraindications or precautions to the flu vaccine. However, the spray is also just as effective as the injection in adults up to 49 years of age. If the nasal spray is available, parents should consider giving their children the spray because of the proven superior efficacy, as told by the CDC. The CDC lists pregnant women, immunosuppressant individuals, patients with egg allergies, and children with asthma, as patients who should not receive the nasal spray.

Resources:

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

<http://www.flu.gov/planning-preparedness/states/louisiana.html>

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6332a3.htm#Considerations_Use_Live_Attenuated

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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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