

2012 National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) Key Points

Overview

1. CDC established National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) in 2005 to highlight the importance of continuing flu vaccination through the holiday season and beyond. **This flu season NIVW is scheduled for December 2-8, 2012.**
 - a. Flu vaccination coverage estimates from past years have shown that influenza vaccination activity drops quickly after the end of November. CDC and its partners want to remind you that even though the holiday season has arrived, it is not too late to get your flu vaccine.
 - b. As long as flu viruses are spreading and causing illness, vaccination can provide protection against the flu and should continue. Even unvaccinated people who have already gotten sick with one flu virus can still benefit from vaccination since the flu vaccine protects against three different flu viruses that are predicted to be the ones that will circulate each season.
2. CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against influenza disease.
3. The flu vaccine is the best way modern medicine currently has to protect against this potentially serious disease.
 - a. While how well flu vaccines work can vary, the findings of many studies from multiple countries across age groups support the benefits of vaccination, especially during years when the vaccine is well-matched to circulating viruses.
4. NIVW efforts will focus on reaching people of all ages about the importance of ongoing flu vaccination.
5. Another goal of NIVW is to communicate the importance of flu vaccination for people who are at high risk for developing flu-related complications.
 - a. People at high risk for developing serious flu complications include children younger than 5 years, people 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and people with certain long-term medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions, blood disorders, morbid obesity, kidney and liver disorders, HIV or AIDS, and cancer.

For these people, getting the flu can mean more serious illness, including hospitalization, or it can mean a worsening of existing chronic conditions.
 - b. A full list of “People at High Risk of Developing Flu–Related Complications” is available at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm.

Vaccination

1. Despite the unpredictable nature of the flu, you should know:
 - a. You need the 2012-13 flu vaccine to protect against the flu viruses experts predict will spread this season.

- b. You need a flu vaccine every year for optimal protection.
 - c. Yearly vaccination is needed because:
 - i. Flu viruses are always changing and new vaccine is made each year so that the vaccine protects against the currently circulating influenza viruses, and
 - ii. Immune protection from vaccination declines over time so vaccination is recommended every year for optimal protection.
 - d. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body to develop full protective immunity.
 - e. Flu activity *usually* peaks in February in the United States and can last as late as May. As long as flu viruses are circulating, it's not too late to get vaccinated.
 - f. With flu activity increasing and family and friends gathering for the holidays, now is a great time to get a flu vaccine to protect yourself and your loved ones.
2. We hope that NIVW will act as a reminder to parents and caregivers of children about the importance of flu vaccination in general and the fact that some children may need two doses of flu vaccine this season to be fully protected. Children younger than 9 years old who are getting vaccinated for the first time will need two doses of vaccine. Some children who have received influenza vaccine previously also will need two doses of vaccine this season to be fully protected. Your child's health care provider can tell you if your child needs two doses.
- a. The 2009 H1N1 flu virus continues to circulate. It wasn't added to the seasonal vaccine until the 2010-2011 flu season. This means that children who did not get the monovalent 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine in 2009-2010, or a seasonal flu vaccine in 2010-2011 or later, will not be fully protected from the 2009 H1N1 flu virus until they receive two doses of the 2012-2013 flu vaccine.
 - b. If your child is younger than 9 and has been vaccinated with only one dose of either the monovalent 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine in 2009-2010 or a seasonal flu vaccine in 2010-2011 or later, make sure he/she gets a second dose if recommended their doctor.
 - c. The first dose should be given as soon as vaccine becomes available. The second dose should be given at least 28 days after the first dose.
 - d. The first dose "primes" the immune system; the second dose provides immune protection. Children who only get one dose but need two doses can have reduced or no protection from a single dose of flu vaccine. If your child has not received a first dose of flu vaccine, get his/her first dose of vaccine *now*.
 - e. Children 6 months through 8 years of age who require 2 doses of flu vaccine do not need to get the same kind of vaccine both times; it's possible to receive the shot or nasal spray for either dose.
 - f. Everyone 9 years of age and older needs only one dose of 2012-2013 flu vaccine.

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3. There are many choices available this year for flu vaccine, both in terms of where to get vaccinated and what vaccine to get.
 - a. Flu vaccines are offered in many locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, retail stores and pharmacies, and health centers, as well as by many employers and schools.
 - b. This season, the regular flu shot is available along with the nasal spray vaccine. The nasal spray is an option for healthy, non-pregnant people 2-49 years of age. There also is a "high-dose" vaccine for people 65 and older and an intradermal vaccine with a much smaller needle that is approved for use in people 18 to 64 years old.
4. Millions of doses of influenza vaccine have been administered to people safely for decades.
5. Once vaccinated, you can enjoy this holiday season knowing that you have taken the single best step to protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu.