



Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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For Immediate Release

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Groups at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications Are Reminded to Get Vaccinated During National Influenza Vaccination Week

December 6, 2013- Watertown, NY - Most people who get the flu will have mild illness, will not need medical care or antiviral drugs, and will recover in less than two weeks. Some people are more likely to get flu complications. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are some examples of flu-related complications. The flu also can make chronic health problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic congestive heart failure may experience a worsening of this condition that is triggered by the flu.

An annual flu vaccination is the best way to prevent the flu as well as flu-related complications. The CDC and the Jefferson County Public Health Service recommend that **everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccination**. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, missed work due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths. Influenza is among the most common respiratory illnesses in the United States, infecting millions of people every flu season. Over 200,000 people are hospitalized each year with the flu. The list below includes the groups of people more likely to get flu-related complications if they get sick from influenza.

People at High Risk for Developing Flu-Related Complications According to the CDC:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- American Indians and Alaskan Natives seem to be at higher risk of flu complications
- People who have medical conditions including:
 - ✓ Asthma
 - ✓ Neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions
 - ✓ Chronic lung disease
 - ✓ Heart disease
 - ✓ Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)
 - ✓ Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus)
 - ✓ Kidney disorders
 - ✓ Liver disorders
 - ✓ Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
 - ✓ Weakened immune system due to disease or medication
 - ✓ People younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
 - ✓ People who are morbidly obese (Body Mass Index, or BMI, of 40 or greater)

National Influenza Vaccination Week Is December 8- 14, 2013 and was established by the CDC to highlight the importance of continuing flu vaccination through the holiday season and beyond. It is not too late to get your flu vaccine. Flu vaccines are offered in many locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, pharmacies, and on Wednesdays at JCPHS. So next time you see a sign that says, "Get Your Flu Vaccine Here," stop in and get your flu vaccine. Or make an appointment with your medical provider today. Use the Flu Vaccine Finder at <http://flushot.healthmap.org> to find the nearest location where you and your family can get vaccinated.