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Frequently Asked Questions About Seasonal Flu

Who should get the flu vaccine?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending vaccination for EVERYONE 6 months of age and older. Since infants under 6 months old can't be vaccinated, their entire family and their caregivers should get vaccinated. A flu vaccine is needed every year since protection only lasts for one season and the flu strains may change each season. The flu vaccine is currently available in Sacramento County. You can go online at www.findaflushot.com to find a location.

What types of flu vaccines are available this season?

There are 3 (three) types of flu vaccines: inactivated (flu shot) for people 6 months and older; live attenuated (nasal spray) for healthy people, 2-49 years of age, who are not pregnant and do not have any chronic health conditions; and the high dose inactivated shot for people 65 years of age and older.

What actions can I take to protect myself and my family against the flu this season?

- A yearly flu vaccine is the best way to protect against this serious disease
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth because germs are spread this way
- Avoid others who are sick and if you are sick stay home to prevent spreading to others
- Eat well, get enough rest, be active, and don't smoke
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Clean doorknobs, computer keyboards, telephones, TV remotes, light switches, countertops (or anything touched by different people) with disinfectant to reduce the spread of infection.

How do I know if I have the flu, a cold, or allergies?

The flu generally includes a high fever, fatigue lasting 2-3 weeks, and severe aches and pains. A cold or allergies will not have these symptoms. Flu symptoms can sometimes include a stuffy nose, sneezing and sore throat but these symptoms are more common with a cold.

Is there treatment for the flu?

Yes. If you get sick, you can take over the counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) for aches and pains or a cough suppressant for a cough. People with chronic medical conditions may be prescribed antiviral medications to prevent complications such as pneumonia. For more information about antiviral medications, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/antivirals/index.htm>.

Where can I find reliable information about the Flu?

The following websites have reliable information: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov/flu> and www.flu.gov