

Flu season is on the way

Mark your calendars to get your flu shot

According to the calendar, summer is over, and many of us are looking forward to the fall. But there is another, less desirable, season on the horizon — the flu season — and it typically starts in November and lasts through April.

Influenza, also known as the flu, is a contagious disease that is caused by a virus. It attacks the respiratory tract in humans (nose, throat and lungs). While vomiting, diarrhea and being “sick to your stomach” can sometimes be related to the flu — particularly in children — these problems are rarely the main symptoms of influenza.

The flu is also different from a cold. It comes on suddenly and may include these symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Body aches.

Each year, 10 to 20 percent of the residents of the United States get influenza. Every year in the U.S. around 114,000 people are admitted to a hospital as a result of the flu. An average of 36,000 people a year die from it.

Anyone can get the flu, and serious flu-related problems can occur at any age. People over 65, people (of any age) with chronic medical conditions, and very young children are those most likely to get complications from influenza. Pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections are three examples of such complications.

The flu 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 triggered by the flu.

The flu is spread when a person who has it coughs, sneezes or speaks and sends flu virus into the air, and other people inhale the virus. The virus enters the nose, throat or lungs and begins to multiply, causing symptoms of influenza. Less often, flu is spread when a person touches a surface that has flu viruses on it — a door handle, for instance — and then touches his or her nose or mouth.

Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body. A person can spread the flu for a full day before he or she feels sick and can continue to be contagious for three to seven days after symptoms have started. Children can pass the virus along for

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Mark your calendars to get your flu shot, cont.

more than seven days. Some persons can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. Those persons can still spread the virus to others.

If you have the flu, rest, drink plenty of liquids, avoid using alcohol and tobacco, and take medication to relieve the symptoms.

If your children or teenagers have the flu, *do not give them aspirin* without first speaking to your doctor. Giving aspirin to children and teenagers can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye syndrome. Young people with the flu should get plenty of rest, drink lots of liquids and take aspirin-free medicines to relieve the symptoms.

Since influenza is caused by a virus, antibiotics won't cure it. The best way to prevent the flu is to get an influenza vaccine (flu shot) each fall, before flu season. The Hanford Environmental Health Foundation is preparing for flu-shot clinics in October. See the schedule on this page to find out when and where you can get your flu shot.

This article was excerpted from the Centers for Disease Control Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/fluinfo.htm>. For more information on the Hanford Site flu-shot clinics, call the HEHF flu-shot hotline at 376-1000. ■

Flu-shot schedule on page 16.

2003 Flu Immunization Schedule

Area	Clinic Date	Time	Location
Battelle	Monday, Oct. 13	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Battelle Auditorium
Battelle	Tuesday, Oct. 28	9 a.m.-noon	Battelle Auditorium
200E Area	Tuesday, Oct. 14	9 a.m.-2 p.m.	2101-M, Cosmos/Bijou Room
200E Area	Thursday, Oct. 30	10 a.m.-1 p.m.	2101-M, Cosmos/Bijou Room
Federal Building	Wednesday, Oct. 15	9 a.m.-2 p.m.	825 Jadwin, room 142
Federal Building	Wednesday, Oct. 29	9 -11 a.m.	825 Jadwin, room 142
100K Area	Thursday, Oct. 16	6 a.m.-noon	MO-500, Conference Room West
200 West Area	Monday, Oct. 20	6:30 -9 a.m.	MO-250
200 West Area	Wednesday, Oct. 22	9 a.m.-2 p.m.	MO-287,Conference Room A111
200 West Area	Wednesday, Oct. 29	1-5 p.m.	HEHF Health Care Center, 2719
300 Area	Monday,Oct. 20	11 a.m.-3 p.m.	3763, Conference Room
100N	Tuesday, Oct. 21	6:30 -9 a.m.	1103N Conference Room A & B
Bechtel	Tuesday, Oct. 21	11:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.	3350 George Washington Way, Assembly Room
2440 Stevens Center	Thursday, Oct. 23	9 a.m.-2 p.m.	Conference Room 1200
400 Area	Monday, Oct. 27	10 a.m.-1 p.m.	4710-A, conference room (Only employees working in this secured area may participate)