



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME L. FUKINO M.D., DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: December 9, 2008

08-107

GET VACCINATED -- THE BEST HOLIDAY GIFT

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) is urging everyone to get an influenza (flu) vaccination this year. Getting vaccinated is the most effective preventive measure against flu. It protects the person vaccinated and helps protect others who may be at risk for complications from the flu.

“It could be the best holiday gift you and your family receive this year,” said Health Director Dr. Chiyome Fukino. “Every year, children and adults miss holiday festivities, classes, work, sports, or risk being hospitalized because of illness and complications from the flu.”

“It’s not too late to get your flu vaccine, especially since influenza activity occurs year round in Hawai'i, and the annual winter rise in flu illness has already begun,” said Dr. Sarah Y. Park, chief of the DOH Disease Outbreak Control Division.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has designated Dec. 8 – 14 as **National Influenza Vaccination Week**. This event is designed to highlight the importance of influenza (flu) vaccination. Tuesday, Dec. 9, is designated as **Children’s Vaccination Day**, Thursday, Dec. 11, is designated as **Seniors’ Vaccination Day**, and Friday, Dec. 12, will focus on **vaccination of health care workers**.

“So far, according to recent CDC strain typing analyses of Hawai'i influenza isolates, the 2008-09 influenza vaccine is a good match with the influenza strains circulating here,” said Dr. Park.

(more)

Flu shots are highly recommended for children ages 6 months through 18 years, adults age 50 years and older, and anyone with chronic health problems such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease. The nasal spray flu vaccine, FluMist®, is approved for use in healthy people who are age 2-49 years and are not pregnant.

The DOH urges everyone to protect themselves as well as their family, friends, and community, by getting vaccinated against the flu during this holiday season. While healthy adults usually recover from the flu, when they are ill they become a source of infection for vulnerable groups like the elderly, the immunocompromised, or the very young.

In addition to getting vaccinated, individuals can protect themselves and their family by practicing the following health tips:

- Stay at home if you are sick – away from others who could become infected
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Boost your immune system by getting lots of rest, eating healthy, and limiting alcohol intake

For more information about where to get a flu shot, call 2-1-1 or visit www.vaxhawaii.com.

###

For more information on this news release, contact:
Judy Strait-Jones
Communications Office
Phone: (808) 586-4402

Janice Okubo
Communications Office
Phone: (808) 586-4442