

## Flu Season 2008

Beginning October 15, 2008, the Influenza vaccine is available at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

This includes both the injectable form and FluMist, a flu vaccine for children and adults 2-49 years old, which administered in the form of a nasal spray. FluMist contains the live virus [a weakened version], and therefore only licensed for certain groups of individuals without chronic medical conditions [or pregnancy]. For more information on FluMist, please visit <http://www.flumist.com/>. As with all influenza vaccine, people who are allergic to eggs should not receive FluMist. FluMist should also not be used in pregnant people [unlike the inactivated injectable version of influenza vaccine, which is highly recommended for pregnant people] or persons with chronic medical conditions, such as known or suspected immune system problems, asthma, or reactive airway disease.

From the manufacturer's web site: "FluMist should not be used, under any circumstances, in anyone with an allergy to any part of the vaccine, including eggs; in children and adolescents receiving aspirin therapy; in people who have a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome; and in people with known or suspected immune system problems. Pregnant women, children under 24 months of age, and people with certain medical conditions, asthma, or reactive airways disease; children under the age of 5 years with recurrent wheezing should not get FluMist."

Influenza vaccination is mandatory for all military personnel. Those who are eligible will receive FluMist. The deadline for all NARMC military personnel to have their influenza vaccination is/was December 31, 2008. All military should be vaccinated for influenza as soon as possible. Beginning October 15<sup>th</sup>, both forms of the Influenza vaccine will be available in Building Two [the main hospital] during the following locations and times. Every effort will be made to expedite for active duty and healthcare workers. The first week (October 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>), will be dedicated to getting the bulk of military personnel and healthcare workers completed. Both clinics will be closed on October 30<sup>th</sup> and November 11<sup>th</sup>.

- Room 2H36 located on the second floor, in the north hallway next to Joel Auditorium:
  - October 15-31: 6:30 AM – 4 PM
  - November 3-14: 7AM – 3:30 PM
  - This clinic also closes early on October 29<sup>th</sup> -- at noon.
- For **Children** aged 6 months to 17 years of age, the Pediatric Clinic 8 AM – 4 PM Monday through Friday. New guidance from the Centers for Disease Control has identified children as being among those at highest risk for influenza infection and illness. They are therefore among the most critical groups of beneficiaries to get vaccinated. See the following websites for more details.

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm>

[http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/2008-09/parents\\_guide.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/2008-09/parents_guide.htm)

**Beneficiaries over the age of 65:** If you have been vaccinated for [Pneumococcal Disease](#) [since your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday], we need documentation for your medical records. Please try to bring your outpatient medical record or other record of prior Pneumococcal vaccination when you come for your influenza vaccination. If you have not received the vaccine yet, it will be available during the flu clinic on these dates.

Although the **single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated** each fall, good health habits and antiviral medications are other measures that can help protect against the flu. Some health habits proven effective in prevention:

- ***Avoid close contact.***  
Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- ***Stay home when you are sick.***  
If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- ***Cover your mouth and nose.***  
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. If you do not have a tissue, try to avoid using your hands. You can try coughing into your sleeve or the bend of your arm.
- ***Clean your hands.***  
Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- ***Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.***  
Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

See <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm> for more information on prevention of influenza.

It is best to check this website or the information line (202) 782-4841 before coming to make sure there are no changes and availability. Both this website and the information line are updated as new information becomes available.

**A note from the commander to all hospital personnel:** Influenza kills approximately 36,000 Americans every year. Most vulnerable are those who are in less than good health, the very young, and the very old. Naturally, these are the people seeking access to the Healthcare system. Because influenza is highly contagious, it is our duty to do everything within reason to protect our beneficiaries from harm while guests in our facility. It is especially important for all Healthcare workers to be vaccinated early in the season, because many times a person with influenza can spread it before they actually become sick with symptoms. This has the additional benefit of protecting your family and colleagues. The vaccination is safe and highly effective. Thank you in advance for your cooperation on this matter.

For an abbreviated message on specific details regarding dates, times and locations for influenza vaccination at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, please call the Flu Hotline at (202) 782-4841.