

## **National Influenza Vaccination Week - December 8-14**

### **It's not too late to get vaccinated – Get your flu shot today!**

After November when you see signs that advertise: “Get Your Flu Vaccine Here,” you might think, “Isn't it too late for that?” The answer is no, it's not too late! “Flu season typically peaks in February and can last as late as May,” says Dr. Anne Schuchat, Assistant Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service and Director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. “We are encouraging people who have not yet been vaccinated this season to get vaccinated now.”

For millions of people every season, the flu can mean a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, fatigue, and miserable days spent in bed. However, you may not realize that more than 200,000 people are hospitalized in the United States from flu complications each year. The flu also can be deadly. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, estimates of yearly flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people during the most severe season.

This is why CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Anyone can get the flu, but some people are at greater risk for serious flu-related complications, like pneumonia, that can lead to hospitalization and even death. For those at greater risk for complications, getting the flu vaccine is especially important. People at greater risk include, but are not limited to:

- Children younger than 5 years old, and especially children younger than 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- People 65 years and older
- People with certain medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease

Ask your doctor if you are uncertain whether you or your family is at a greater risk for flu complications. It's also important for you to get the vaccine if you care for anyone at high risk, including babies younger than 6 months because they are too young to get the vaccine.

“Getting the flu vaccine is simple, and it's the most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your family from the flu,” says Dr. Schuchat.

The Bedford Board of Health has scheduled the following two clinics to provide flu vaccine to serve Bedford residents, including children and college students returning home for the holidays: **Wednesday, December 11, 2013, 1:30pm – 3:30pm** and **Thursday, December 19, 2013, 3pm – 4pm**. The clinics will be held in the Flint Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of the Town Center Building (yellow building behind Town Hall) located at 12 Mudge Way. These walk-in flu clinics are free and open to Bedford residents 6 months of age and older. Please wear clothing that allows for easy access to your arm for vaccine administration. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. We will have the following flu vaccine formulations available at this clinic: flu shot, flu mist (nasal spray for healthy children 2-18 years of age) and high-dose flu vaccine (flu shot for residents 65 years of age and over). Please note:

we have a limited supply of flu mist and high dose vaccine. All vaccine will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.

Before you arrive at the walk-in clinic, please download and complete the appropriate registration form (either Flu Shot or Flu Mist) from our website. The Board of Health asks that you bring your medical insurance cards to the clinic. Insurance reimbursements help us sustain this very important public health program.

For the registration forms and more information about the flu vaccine please click on the Flu Information link on the Board of Health website at [www.bedfordma.gov/health](http://www.bedfordma.gov/health).