



A Healthy Workforce

Vaccination Services of America and Health Fairs of America – sister companies
in the fight against rising employee health costs

2008 – 2009 Provisional Influenza Recommendations Announced

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) posted its Provisional Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza. The recommendations, announced March 21, 2008, are currently under review by the Director of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). They will become official when published in the June 2008 issue of CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

Please see the preliminary recommendations at the end of this article.

How Effective is the Seasonal Influenza Vaccine?

The effectiveness of the vaccine depends, in part, on the match between the viruses in the vaccine and influenza viruses that are circulating in the community. However, it's important to remember that even when the viruses are not closely matched, the vaccine can still protect many people and prevent flu-related complications.

As of February 9, 2008, nearly all H1N1 viruses tested at CDC were well-matched to the H1N1 vaccine strain. However, most of the H3N2 and B virus strains were different from those contained in the vaccine. This suggests that protection against circulating H3N2 and B virus strains may not be optimal. As stated above, however, even when the viruses are not closely matched, the vaccine can protect many people and prevent flu-related complications. Therefore, the CDC continues to recommend influenza vaccination even during seasons when there is a less than ideal match. This is particularly important for people at high risk for serious flu complications and their close contacts.

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National Headquarters

9320 H Court
Omaha, NE 68127

1.888.434.4FLU

vsamerica.com
healthfairsamerica.com

New York City

At 66 West 38th Street
(Between 5th & 6th Ave.)

1.212.575.1875

Flu Facts from the CDC

Every year in the United States, on average:

- 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu;
- more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and;
- about 36,000 people die from flu.

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The provisional recommendations for the prevention and control of influenza in the 2008 – 2009 flu season include the following:

- Annual vaccination of children aged 6 months – 59 months should continue.
- Annual vaccination for all children aged 6 months – 18 years.
- Annual vaccination for all children aged 6 months – 18 years should begin no later than during the 2009 - 2010 influenza season.
- If feasible, annual vaccination of all children aged 5 years – 18 years should begin in 2008 when the vaccine for the 2008 - 2009 influenza season becomes available.
- Persons at higher risk of influenza complications because of underlying medical conditions, children aged 6 months – 23 months, and persons aged > 49 years should receive TIV. Either trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (TIV) or live, attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) should be used when vaccinating persons aged 2 – 49 years who do not have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza complications.
- Children aged 6 months – 8 years should receive 2 doses of influenza vaccine (doses separated by > 4 weeks) if they have not been vaccinated previously at any time with at least one dose of either LAIV or TIV.
- Clinicians and immunization program staff should screen for possible reactive airways diseases when considering use of LAIV for children aged 2 – 4 years, and should avoid use of this vaccine in children with asthma or a recent wheezing episode. The ACIP has previously provided recommendations on screening for possible reactive airways diseases in children aged 2 – 4 years.
- Recommendations for annual vaccination of persons in other age or risk groups were not changed, and can be found in Prevention and Control of Influenza: Recommendations of the ACIP, 2007.
- The 2008 – 2009 trivalent vaccine virus strains are A/Brisbane/59/2007 (H1N1)-like, A/Brisbane/10/2007 (H3N2)-like, and B/Florida/4/2006-like antigens. All three strains are different from the 2007-2008 Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine.
- The antiviral medications recommended for chemoprophylaxis or treatment of influenza (oseltamivir or zanamivir) have not changed for the 2008 - 2009 influenza season.

Save up to 20%

Sign up NOW for company flu vaccinations and you'll save up to 20% or \$5 per shot for your employees this fall!

Health Fairs of America, the leading supplier of flu shots to corporations in the U.S., has just received the lowest possible flu vaccine price from our pharmaceutical company. But, once our special allocation is depleted, we have to return to our regular pricing.

Sign up NOW. This price is contingent on early commitments by our clients.

Save NOW. You could realize a savings of up to \$5,000 on vaccinations for 1,000 employees this fall. Contact us today because tomorrow will be too late.

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