



# NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

## 2017-2018 INFLUENZA SEASON

Influenza (commonly called “flu”) is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. These viruses are spread when a person who has the flu coughs, sneezes or touches a surface handled by others. It can be mild or severe and infects millions of Americans every year. On average, more than 225,000 people are hospitalized annually for seasonal flu-related complications. The best way to prevent getting the flu is to get vaccinated. It takes up to two weeks after vaccination for protection (immunity) to develop in the majority of adults. To ensure proper protection from the seasonal flu virus, which can begin to circulate early in the fall, the Department of Health has scheduled immunization clinics throughout the month of October. Persons 9 years and older will be eligible to receive influenza vaccine at Department clinics. The **Fluzone High-Dose vaccine**, made especially for people 65 years of age and older, will be offered at clinics. Clinical trials indicate that the Fluzone High Dose vaccine helps strengthen the body’s immune response in older people. The Department will also offer a seasonal influenza vaccine containing four (quadrivalent) influenza virus strains. If Fluzone High Dose vaccine is not available the quadrivalent vaccine should be taken, as it provides protection against four (4) influenza virus strains. Department clinics will also have shingles vaccine available in limited quantities for those persons 60 years and older and pneumonia vaccines for persons 65 years and older.

Flu vaccines are made to protect against the most common flu viruses anticipated each year. **The seasonal influenza vaccine being offered contains one Influenza A-like (H3N2) virus, one Influenza A-like (H1N1) virus and two Influenza B-like viruses.** The viruses in the flu shot are inactivated (not live), so **you cannot get the flu from a flu shot.** Some minor side effects that could occur are: low grade fever, soreness and aches. Usually people experience a rapid onset of high fever (although not all individuals exhibit fever), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, chills, headache, fatigue and body aches. Director of Health, Caroline C. Baisley, emphasized, “Getting vaccinated for seasonal influenza is the best way to provide protection against circulating influenza viruses. The traditional flu season begins early October and runs through May in most years and sustained influenza transmission is usually not seen before January or later. The Department of Health is committed to working with medical providers in an effort to provide influenza vaccine in the community, especially to those at increased risk for severe complications from influenza.” Influenza can affect anyone. People at high risk include children under the age of 5, pregnant women, adults over 65 and people with underlying medical conditions.

**Who should get the Seasonal Flu Shot** (age appropriate vaccine available):

- People aged 6 months of age and older, with rare exceptions
- Persons 6 months of age and older with underlying chronic medical conditions like chronic pulmonary disorders such as asthma, cardiovascular disease (except hypertension), diabetes, neurological, hepatic or renal disorders and immunosuppression, that require frequent or ongoing medical management
- Pregnant women or those who will become pregnant during the influenza season
- Household contacts and caregivers of people who are at high risk

- Close contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children and adolescents at high-risk, especially infants under six months of age
- Healthcare workers and residents of nursing homes and other long term care facilities
- Persons who are morbidly obese (BMI > 40)
- Persons who are 6 months through 18 years and receiving long-term aspirin therapy

**Note:** Seasonal influenza vaccine is recommended for all persons aged 6 months of age and older, however, immunizations will not be administered to individuals under 9 years of age at the Department clinics. For additional information about younger children, please contact the Department of Health's Division of Family Health.

#### **Who should NOT get the Seasonal Flu Shot:**

- Children younger than 6 months of age
- People with severe life-threatening allergies to flu vaccine or an ingredient in the vaccine. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) makes specific recommendations for the use of influenza vaccine in persons with egg allergy.

**People younger than 65 years of age should not receive the Fluzone High Dose Vaccine**

**For the 2017-2018 flu season, ACIP recommends that LAIV4 (nasal mist) not be used.**

#### **Who should consult with a healthcare provider before getting the flu shot:**

- People who previously developed Gullain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting a flu shot
- People who have an allergy to eggs
- People who have a moderate to severe illness with a fever

### **Recommendations for Pneumococcal Vaccine**

- All adults 65 years or older should receive a dose of Pneumovax (PPSV23) and Prevnar (PCV13). A health care provider should be consulted for the timing of specific pneumococcal vaccines.
- Adults aged 19-64 who have long-term medical conditions
- Persons who received PPSV23 pneumococcal vaccination **before** the age of 65 should have a booster if it has been five or more years since the vaccination. Please check with your physician if you don't know the date of your pneumonia vaccination.

“Although the single best way to prevent the flu or pneumonia is to get vaccinated, there are other ways to protect yourself from respiratory illnesses,” states Director of Family Health, Deborah Travers. Those steps include:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** Keep your distance from others when you are sick
- **Stay home from work or school when you are sick** for at least 24 hours after your fever (100° F and above) is gone, except to seek medical care. Your fever should be gone without using fever reducing medications or antiviral drugs. It could take up to one week or more to feel better.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** when you sneeze or cough (tissue or sleeve)
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water frequently. If soap and water is not available, alcohol-based cleaners (at least 60% alcohol ingredient) are effective.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth** germs are spread this way.
- **Get plenty of sleep, water, healthy food and exercise**

- **Seek medical care early.** Consult your health care provider immediately if you develop flu symptoms.

During the influenza season, the public is encouraged to call the Department of Health flu information hotline for up-to-date information at 203-622-3774, or visit the Department's website main page at [www.greenwichct.org](http://www.greenwichct.org).

**GREENWICH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH****INFLUENZA, PNEUMONIA AND ADULT VACCINE IMMUNIZATION CLINIC SCHEDULE – 2017**

*Not Just For Seniors!*

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS EXPO***(Formerly Senior Health Fair)***THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2017**

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**EASTERN GREENWICH CIVIC CENTER**

Harding Road, Old Greenwich

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2017**

2:30 – 5:30 PM

**GREENWICH TOWN HALL**

101 Field Point Road, Greenwich

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2017**

3:30 – 5:30 PM

**BENDHEIM WESTERN GREENWICH CIVIC CENTER**

449 Pemberwick Road, Greenwich

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017**

3:30 - 6:00 PM

**EASTERN GREENWICH CIVIC CENTER**

Harding Road, Old Greenwich

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2017**

2:30 – 5:30 PM

**GREENWICH TOWN HALL**

101 Field Point Road, Greenwich

***All clinics are for persons 9 years of age and older*****FEES AND ACCEPTED INSURANCE**

Participants between the ages of **9 years to 64 years** will be charged **\$35.00** for the seasonal influenza immunization.

Participants **65 years of age or older** must bring their Medicare Advantage ID Card/Traditional Medicare Part B Card or a fee of **\$35.00** (Seasonal); **\$45.00** (High Dose); **\$90.00** (Pneumovax 23); **\$180.00** (Prevnar 13) will be charged for the immunizations.

**Medicare Advantage Plans DO NOT cover pneumonia immunizations received at public clinics.**

**Pneumonia immunizations must be over one year apart or Medicare will not cover the cost.**

**Shingles** vaccine which is recommended for adults **60 years of age and older** will be available at all flu clinics, but quantities will be limited. Shingles vaccine is also available through the Division of Family Health Immunization Clinic. Appointments are recommended (203-622-6495). The charge for shingles is **\$215.00** (limited quantities at clinics – cash/check only– receipts available).

Checks should be made payable to the “**TOWN OF GREENWICH**” and if paying with cash, exact change will be appreciated.

**Medicaid will not be accepted; however, patients are advised to call 203-622-7851 for further assistance.**

**Credit cards will not be accepted.**

Short sleeves and attendance no earlier than 15 minutes before the start of the clinic will be appreciated.

The public is encouraged to call the flu line at: **203-622-3774** prior to attending any clinic. All changes to the set schedule will be recorded and publicized to the best of the Department’s capability.

