



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Preparing for the Season

National Influenza Vaccination Week — December 4-10, 2016

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Dr. Joe Bresee, an expert with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

It's important to be ready for flu season. In the U.S., flu season starts in the fall and goes through the spring, typically peaking between January and March.

Everyone in the United States over six months of age should be vaccinated each and every year. This is because the virus changes constantly so that last year's vaccine may not protect well against this year's flu strains. This year's flu vaccine is specifically designed to protect us from the flu viruses that are expected to circulate this season.

While we recommend that everyone gets a flu vaccine every single year, some people are at higher risk for severe disease or complications if they get the flu infection. These include people over 65 years of age; very young children, especially kids under five years of age; in addition, anyone with certain chronic diseases, like heart or lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease; and finally, pregnant women who are at increased risk of hospitalizations if they get infected with the flu.

On average, the vaccine will reduce a person's chance of getting sick and having complications from the flu by 50 to 60 percent. While the effectiveness can vary from year to year, the flu vaccine remains the best tool you have to protect you and your family from getting the flu.

For listeners who want more information about the flu or where to get a flu vaccine, please go to cdc.gov/flu.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Joe Bresee for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.