



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

'Tis the Season for Flu Vaccine

National Influenza Vaccination Week — December 6–12, 2015

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

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Flu season typically runs from late fall through early spring. Dr. Lisa Grohskopf is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of getting vaccinated against the flu. Welcome to the show, Lisa.

[Dr. Grohskopf] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Lisa, at what age can a person start getting the annual flu vaccine?

[Dr. Grohskopf] People can start getting vaccinated at six months of age, and it's important to get a vaccine *every* year.

[Dr. Gaynes] Can we get vaccinated at any time during the flu season?

[Dr. Grohskopf] Yes. Ideally, you want to get vaccinated before the peak of the flu season but, as long as influenza is circulating in your community, it is never too late to get vaccinated.

[Dr. Gaynes] So who is at highest risk for getting flu?

[Dr. Grohskopf] *Anyone* can get the flu. However, some people are at higher risk for getting seriously ill when they get the flu. These include people who are 65 and older; young children under five, and especially those under two; and people with certain chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes.

[Dr. Gaynes] Besides the vaccine, are there other ways we can reduce our chances of getting the flu?

[Dr. Grohskopf] Yes. The vaccine is the best way of preventing the flu but there are other things you can do, as well, such as washing your hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and avoiding contact with people who have the flu.

[Dr. Gaynes] Some people think the flu vaccine can give them the flu. What would you say to them?

[Dr. Grohskopf] No. The flu vaccine does *not* cause the flu. Some people, after they get vaccinated, may have things like a sore arm or muscle aches or a stuffy or runny nose, but these symptoms are mild and short lived and not as severe as getting the actual flu. Also, it's important

to remember that it takes two weeks to get full protection after you get vaccinated, so it's still possible to get the flu soon after vaccination. Finally, there are many other respiratory viruses that circulate around the same time of year and the flu vaccine doesn't protect against these other viruses. However, flu vaccine does not cause the flu.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about the flu vaccine?

[Dr. Grohskopf] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/flu.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Lisa. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Lisa Grohskopf about the importance of getting vaccinated against influenza.

The vaccine is recommended for *everyone* six months and older. Annual flu vaccines are available at pharmacies, health departments, and doctor's offices.

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

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