

Seniors and those at risk of flu reminded to get flu shots

Contributed by Editor
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LAKE COUNTY – Once again, it is flu season. The Lake County Public Health Department is reminding seniors and those who are at high risk for complications of flu to take advantage of our low cost flu shot clinics.

Influenza can cause significant problems for older adults and also for small children. If you have a household member or are a caregiver for anyone less than 5 or over 60 years of age, you should consider getting vaccinated as well. Health care workers who provide direct patient care should also get vaccinated. Getting a flu shot is an effective way to help protect yourself and your community.

The Lake County Public Health Department has been allotted 3,430 doses of vaccine for the 2008-09 season. This year's vaccine contains three new influenza virus strains. The 2008-09 influenza vaccine can protect you against these three viruses, or it can make your illness milder if you get infected with a related but different influenza strain.

The county's low-cost influenza vaccination clinics are available to people who meet the eligibility criteria listed below.

Eligibility criteria are as follows: Adults over 60 years of age; children 6 months to 18 years of age; pregnant women (please notify the nurse that you are pregnant before receiving your flu shot, as pregnant women receive a different vaccine formulation; persons with certain chronic medical conditions; those who live with or care for persons at high risk, including children under age 5 and/or adults over 60 years of age; health care workers.

All flu shots are \$2.

The clinic schedule is as follows:

Clearlake – Tuesday, Oct. 14, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Senior Community Center, 3245 Bowers Road. Due to the large turnout expected at the clinic, they want to decrease the waiting time by having people come in two groups: Last names beginning with A-L, 10 a.m. to noon; last names beginning with M-Z, noon to 2 p.m.

Lakeport – Thursday, Oct. 16, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Seventh Day Adventist Church, 3500 Hill Road East. Due to the large turnout expected at the clinic, they want to decrease the waiting time by having people come in two groups: Last names beginning with A-L, 10 a.m. to noon; last names beginning with M-Z, noon to 2 p.m.

Middletown – Wednesday, Oct. 22, 10 a.m. to noon at the Calpine Visitor Center, 15500 Central Park Road.

Lucerne – Thursday, Oct. 23, 10 a.m. to noon, Lucerne Alpine Senior Center, 10th and Country Club Drive.

Lakeport – Wednesday, Oct. 29, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Public Health Department, 922 Bevins Ct.

Clearlake – Thursday, Oct. 30, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Public Health Department, 7000 B S. Center Drive.

Tetanus and pneumonia vaccines will not be offered at the flu clinics this year, but they are available year round at the Public Health Department. Adults should receive a tetanus booster every 10 years and the pneumonia shot is a once-in-a-lifetime vaccine given after the age of 65. The cost for the tetanus shot is \$54.79 and the cost for the pneumonia shot is \$65.69.

If you and /or your family would like to be protected from the flu and do not qualify for the low-cost vaccine clinics, please call your regular doctor's office. Many local pharmacies also offer flu shots this time of year.

Getting vaccinated is the most effective way to prevent the flu, but there are other things we can all do to help keep ourselves healthy. Wash your hands often and try not to touch your face with your hands. Viruses can enter the body through the membranes of your nose, mouth and eyes. If you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow instead of your hands. Viruses pass easily from your hands to the things you touch. Also, when you are feeling ill, try to stay home to avoid infecting others.

For more information call the Public Health Department, 1-800-794-9291, 263-1090 or 994-9433.

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