

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE SEASONAL FLU AND THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE

About Seasonal Influenza (flu):

The flu is a highly contagious respiratory illness which is caused by the influenza virus. Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread the virus to others. Symptoms of seasonal flu include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle and body aches, and extreme tiredness. The flu can leave you sick in bed for many days and in some cases hospitalized.

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated every year. It is best to get vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available to be protected before the flu virus begins to circulate. The flu vaccine, however, can be administered at any time over the course of the flu season.

About the Seasonal Flu Shot:

The 2011-2012 flu vaccine will protect against three different flu viruses. This year's vaccine will include a H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season. It is not possible to contract the influenza virus from getting the flu shot. The viruses used in the vaccine are killed so therefore can not cause any illness. This year's strains are: **A/California (H1N1), A/Perth (H3N2), and B/Brisbane (2009-like virus).**

The vaccine begins to provide protection approximately 1-2 weeks after the shot is given. The shot will not protect you against other illnesses that resemble the flu.

Who Should Get a Flu Shot?

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that **EVERYONE, six months and older**, should get a seasonal flu shot.

What Side Effects/Adverse Reactions May Occur and What to Do:

- Mild flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, aches, and extreme tiredness). Reactions begin 6-12 hours after vaccination and can persist for 1-2 days.
- Soreness at the injection site – apply ice to the affected area.
- **Fever, achiness and/or headache – if you do not improve in 24-48 hours contact your health care provider or VNAHG at 800-862-3330.**

Who should NOT be vaccinated at a public site (go to your personal health care provider):

- Anyone allergic to chicken eggs or chicken egg products, benadryl or epinephrine.
- Anyone who had a severe reaction to a previous dose of influenza vaccine
- Anyone with history of Guillain Barre Syndrome (GBS).
- If you are experiencing a moderate to severe illness, you must wait to obtain the flu vaccine until you are feeling better.

For more information, visit www.vnahg.org or call the

FLU HOTLINE 732-224-6985