

Nation's Pharmacists Ready to Administer Seasonal Flu Vaccines

Written by Michelle Fritts

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WASHINGTON, DC – The [American Pharmacists Association](#) (APhA) is encouraging consumers to get immunized against influenza and to speak with their pharmacist about the options available at their local pharmacy. Pharmacists are authorized to give flu vaccinations in all 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico, and more than 150,000 U.S. pharmacists have been trained in the practice of immunization administration. The CDC estimates that approximately 20% of the seasonal flu vaccinations given to adults during the 2010-2011 season were administered by pharmacists.

“APhA encourages consumers to be proactive and talk to their pharmacist about their vaccination needs and the immunization process at the pharmacy,” said APhA CEO and Executive Vice President Thomas Menighan. “A pharmacist goes through six years or more of school, depending on his/her area of specialization. In addition to their specialized training as medication experts, pharmacists can go through a formal training program to gain the skill set and knowledge to administer immunizations. This formal training helps ensure reliable and consistent immunization care for patients. “

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 5 to 20 percent of the US population is infected with influenza every year, and over the past 31 years, annual influenza related deaths have ranged from 3,000 to 49,000. Consistent with the recommendations by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), APhA recommends that all persons six months of age and older be vaccinated each year.

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“The local pharmacy is a convenient and easily accessible place to get your flu shot,” stated Vincent Hartzell, Owner and Director of Patient Care Services, Hartzell's Pharmacy. “Your pharmacist is readily available to discuss vaccines and how they can help keep your family healthy. Many pharmacies have year-round walk-in hours and immunization clinics during the peak season. In most cases, a patient can get vaccinated in the time it takes to wait for their prescriptions.”

The flu vaccine administered in the local pharmacy is supplied by the same major manufacturers who supply the vaccines to doctors and other healthcare providers. The 2011-2012 vaccine is now available and health care providers should begin vaccinating patients as soon as they receive their supply. Consumers are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated early in the season, but immunizations can be received as long as vaccine supply is available. There are several methods of flu vaccination available, depending upon the patient's age and health conditions. Make sure to ask your pharmacist or other health care provider about which is right for you.

In many states, pharmacists are able to administer other important immunizations. Check with your local pharmacist to determine which vaccines they administer. Immunizations may include:

- Pneumococcal (Pneumonia)
- Meningococcal (Meningitis)
- Hepatitis B
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis)
- Zoster (Shingles)

Consumers should hold a conversation with their pharmacist and their other healthcare providers about their vaccination needs. Pharmacists work in conjunction with doctors and other health care providers to optimize care, improve medication use and to prevent disease. APhA encourages consumers to fill all their prescriptions with one pharmacy to get to know their pharmacist on a first name basis, to carry an up-date medication and vaccination list and to share all medical information with each of their health care providers.

About the [American Pharmacists Association](#)

The American Pharmacists Association, founded in 1852 as the American Pharmaceutical Association, is a 501 (c)(6) organization, representing more than 62,000 practicing

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pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, student pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and others interested in advancing the profession. APhA, dedicated to helping all pharmacists improve medication use and advance patient care, is the first-established and largest association of pharmacists in the United States.

This press release is part of a multi-media educational campaign by the American Pharmacists Association to generate awareness among consumers about pharmacist training in immunization administration, the importance of getting a flu shot every year and the convenience of getting a flu shot at the pharmacy. The campaign is sponsored in part by Novartis Vaccines.

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