



STATE OF MARYLAND

# DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **DHMH Reminds Marylanders to Get Flu Shots**

BALTIMORE, MD (October 4, 2006) -- The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) reminds Marylanders that it is time to get their annual influenza vaccination.

“The best time to get vaccinated is early in the season, before the illness hits our region full-force,” said DHMH Secretary S. Anthony McCann. “I encourage everyone, especially those in a high-risk category, to contact their physician or health care provider to arrange for a vaccination.” Maryland residents may also contact their local health department for a schedule of influenza vaccination clinics.

A special initiative this year is the immunization of children aged five to 11. The state has entered into a collaborative public/private sector agreement that will supply FluMist<sup>®</sup> vaccine at no cost to children in that age range.

“By vaccinating the children, we will help keep them in school, healthy and learning,” Secretary McCann said. “In addition, previous studies have indicated that living with children who have been vaccinated reduces the risk of influenza to the family.”

Health officials are expecting none of the problems encountered in previous years that affected the supply of vaccine. Approximately 100 million doses will be available nationwide, more than at any other time. Some vaccine will be delivered in November and December, to assure a supply is available for those who choose to wait.

Each year the flu strain changes. This year’s vaccine protects against influenza Type A New Caledonia, Type A Wisconsin, and Type B Malaysia.

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Typical flu symptoms included fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose headache, muscle aches and extreme fatigue. Children may experience gastrointestinal problems including nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

**Ways to decrease the chances of getting the flu are:**

- Avoid prolonged contact with individuals showing possible symptoms of the flu.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle to build your immune system.
- Eat balanced meals, including plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables; drink lots of water.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Get vaccinated for the flu (flu vaccines are 70% to 90% effective among healthy adults).

Other tips are available by clicking on 'flu information' in the 'updates' section of the DHMH Web site at <[www.edcp.org](http://www.edcp.org)>.

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