Take Time This Flu Season to Get A Flu Vaccine

Influenza (commonly called “flu”) is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older should be immunized.

Influenza viruses are spread when a person who has the flu coughs, sneezes or touches a surface handled by others. Unlike many other viral respiratory infections, such as the common cold, the flu can cause severe illness and life-threatening complications in many people. Each year, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized, which includes 20,000 children under the age of 5. Getting a flu vaccine is easy, and it is the single best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from flu.

Yearly flu vaccination should begin as soon as vaccine is available, and should continue throughout the flu season which can last as late as May. To get a flu vaccine check with your health care provider. Even if you don’t have a regular health care provider, you can get a flu vaccine from one of these other locations:

**Santa Barbara County Health Care Centers / Community Clinics / Hospitals**
Community Health Centers of the Central Coast - [www.chccc.org](http://www.chccc.org) - 1-866-614-4636
Cottage Health Systems Flu Hotline – [www.sbcch.org](http://www.sbcch.org) - 569-7474
Marian Community Clinics – 739-3890 / Guadalupe 343-2004
Sansum Clinics Flu Hotline - [www.sansumclinic.org](http://www.sansumclinic.org) - Santa Barbara 681-7805 / Lompoc 737-8640
Santa Barbara County Health Care Centers – [www.sbcphd.org/iz](http://www.sbcphd.org/iz)
   - Carpinteria 560-1050 Franklin 568-2099 / Lompoc 737-6400 / Santa Maria 346-7230
Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics – [www.sbclinics.com](http://www.sbclinics.com)
   - Eastside 963-1641 / Isla Vista 968-1511 / Westside 963-1546

Several pharmacy and store chains are also offering flu vaccine. For more information about flu vaccines offered through these venues visit: [www.flucliniclocator.org](http://www.flucliniclocator.org).

Flu shots are covered by Medicare Part B and by most insurance plans. Please check with your insurance provider for coverage details.

The California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program provides flu vaccine for eligible children at no cost. Check with your child’s provider to see if they participate in the VFC Program. Children enrolled in California’s Healthy Families plan receive free flu vaccine with no copayment from their provider.

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