



PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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www.putnamcountyny.gov/health

A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Research Shows Flu Vaccines Reduce Chance of Serious Illness; *PCDOH Schedules Three Fall Public Flu Clinics*

BREWSTER, NY— Every year scientists reformulate the flu vaccine. They base it on strains that circulated last year and ones predicted to be a threat in the upcoming season. As a result, how well the vaccine works varies each year. However, evidence from a new CDC-supported study now shows that while a vaccinated person may still get the flu, how seriously ill they become is reduced by getting the shot. The study was conducted over four flu seasons from 2012 to 2015. It showed that with a flu shot the chance of an adult being admitted to a general hospital floor with flu was reduced by 32 percent, while the risk of being admitted to an intensive care unit with flu was reduced by 82 percent.

“Getting a flu shot can protect your health and the health of your family,” says County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “Our health department goes into the community to senior centers and schools and tries to make it convenient and available to as many people as possible.”

“The flu vaccine varies in effectiveness from year to year, but it is still the best way to prevent influenza and its potentially serious complications,” says interim Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD. “It prevents millions of flu illnesses and related doctors’ visits and has been proven to reduce the severity and duration of the flu, should you happen to come down with it. The bottom line is it helps protect your health all around, and the health of our community.”

Three public flu clinics are scheduled for the fall. Hosted by the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH), the first clinic is Monday, September 24, at the Carmel Fire Department, Route 52 and Vink Drive in Carmel. The second is on Wednesday, October 10, at the Garrison Fire Department, 1616 Route 9; the third is Monday, October 22, at Carmel Fire Department again. The health department’s skilled and experienced public health nurses will be giving flu shots at each site from 2 to 6:30 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

“Early vaccination offers the best protection,” continues Dr. Nesheiwat. “It takes about two weeks for your antibodies to develop, so receiving your shot early means your protection starts sooner. Certain people need to be vaccinated. They include pregnant women, children 6 months through 18 years of age, people over 50 years of age, and those with chronic, or long-lasting, medical conditions and those who live with them. All these groups may have serious health problems if they get the flu themselves. Health care workers are also required to get the flu vaccine in order to protect their patients.”

Flu shots are important for other reasons as well. Medical and prescription costs are reduced along with work absenteeism. From a public health standpoint, flu immunization is important because it provides “herd immunity,” so that those who can’t be vaccinated because they are too young, or have a specific medical condition, are protected as well.

The clinics are open to all Putnam County residents 18 years of age and older. Proof of residency is required, along with a signed consent form. Forms will be available at the clinics, but residents are encouraged to download and complete the form ahead of time. Forms are posted on the health department’s immunization page on Putnam County website at www.putnamcountyny.com/health/immunization. The fee for vaccination is \$25 for residents under 65 years of age. Those 65 years and older, or with a Medicare card, can receive the vaccine free of charge. High-dose flu vaccine is being offered for seniors, aged 65 years and older, as studies show this vaccine is more effective for this population. (Pneumonia vaccine will not be offered at the flu clinics.)

More public flu clinics may be held later this year. Any future dates will be announced on the health department’s website and through social media. Flu vaccination is also offered by the Health Department in all school districts this fall for students and staff only. Check the school calendar or with the school nurse for details of these school-based clinics.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit our County website at www.putnamcountyny.com ; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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