Take a Shot: Americans Encouraged to Get Flu Vaccine

December 13, 2011

As the winter winds blow and the temperature drops, more folks stateside should take advantage of flu vaccinations, according to a statement from the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and reported by HealthDay News.

Each year, the flu strikes 20 percent of Americans, sending more than 200,000 people to the hospital and killing thousands. Why? Because even though a flu vaccine is readily available, few Americans get it.

This year, IDSA encouraged all Americans who can get vaccinated to do so immediately, before we're in the thick of flu season.

The reason why is because the virus spreads easily. These nasties can cause fever, cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and tiredness, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.

What's more, even though some people recover from the flu after two weeks, others can develop serious diseases such as pneumonia.

Those most at risk for flu complications include all children younger than 19, all adults older than 50, pregnant women, caregivers, and individuals with chronic health issues.

"The flu shot is like a seat belt; it's easy to use and protects against serious complications, even if the protection is not perfect," said Andrew Pavia, MD, chair of IDSA's Pandemic Influenza Task Force and chief of the division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the University of Utah.

Want to get flu protection but you're scared of needles? Well, you can get the vaccine every fall via a nasal spray. Flu vaccines work by exposing your immune system to the virus and allowing your body to build up the antibodies necessary to protect you from getting the flu. And though some people who get the vaccine still get the flu, they usually get a milder version.

According to Pavia, last year, during a relatively mild flu season, doctors treated very severe

complications of the flu in otherwise healthy teenagers. That’s why he said everybody, even healthy people, should get the flu vaccine.

Are you and your loved ones prepared for flu season? Click here to read more about whether older black folks in nursing homes are flu-proof.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Americans-Get-Vaccinated-21619-7080