

NEWS RELEASE
November 21, 2006

MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
411 NORTH 5TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584
(360) 427-9670 EXT. 419

TO: KMAS, KRXV, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL

RE: National Influenza Vaccination Week

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced November 13th 2006, the designation of the week after Thanksgiving as National Influenza Vaccination Week. This year, National Influenza Vaccination Week will run from November 27 to December 3. This event is designed to raise awareness of the importance of continuing influenza (flu) vaccination, as well as foster greater use of flu vaccine through the months of November, December and beyond. CDC is recommending that people take this opportunity to be vaccinated.

"Getting vaccinated is the single best way for people to protect not only themselves against flu, but their loved ones as well," said Dr. Julie Gerberding, CDC Director. "National interest in getting a flu vaccination has traditionally tapered off after Thanksgiving. Since flu activity typically does not peak until February or later, November and December are also good times to be vaccinated."

Vaccinations are recommended for anyone who wants to decrease the risk of influenza. While anyone can get influenza-and the infection can be severe-many groups, including people aged 50 years or more, those with chronic illnesses (heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, diabetes), and pregnant women, are at highest risk for complications. In addition, those in close contact with these high risk persons, such as health care personnel, and healthy household contacts and caregivers of high risk persons, are also at increased risk and should get vaccinated.

Children ages 6 months to 23 months are nearly as likely to be hospitalized for complications due to flu as those aged 65 years and older and are part of the high-risk group needing flu vaccination. For the first time, CDC is also recommending children aged 24 months to 59 months be vaccinated, since they are also considered at risk for complications of flu.

The Mason County Health Department will be having a flu clinic for the public on December 4th at the Mason County Health Department located on 303 N and 4th street in Shelton. It is a walk in clinic from 9am-4pm. Cost of vaccine \$25 for adult and \$15 for children (6 mo to 18yrs). Fred Myers is having flu clinics on November 29th, December 1st and tentatively December 6th and 8th if supplies last from 1-4pm. Safeway and QFC in Belfair presently have vaccine available by call in appointments.

For additional information, you may contact Mason County Department of Health's flu line at (360) 427-9670 ext. 599. Let's work together for a safer and healthier Mason County.

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