

National Influenza Vaccination Week is December 4-10 – Get the flu vaccine, not the flu

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) is a national observance that was established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2005 to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination—as well as fostering greater use of flu vaccine—after the holiday season into January and beyond. For the 2011-2012 season, NIVW is scheduled for December 4-10 and this year's events will encourage everyone 6 months and older to *"Get the flu vaccine, not the flu."*

Influenza is among the most common respiratory illnesses in the United States, infecting millions of people every flu season. An annual flu vaccination is the best way to prevent the flu and the flu-related complications that could lead to hospitalization and even death. Also, since flu viruses are constantly changing and immunity can decline over time, annual vaccination is needed for optimal protection.

Influenza can cause severe illness and even death for *anyone*, regardless whether or not they have high risk conditions. However, people with certain long-term health conditions are at much greater risk of suffering from serious flu complications, as demonstrated last season when 80 percent of adults hospitalized from flu complications had a long-term health condition (asthma, diabetes, and chronic heart disease were the most common).

What Can You Do?

National Influenza Vaccination Week presents a great opportunity for healthcare providers to educate seniors and others with Medicare that a flu vaccine is the first and best way to prevent influenza, and that it's particularly important in people who are at higher risk of serious flu complications. It is also a great time to inform those with Medicare about other preventive services covered by Medicare that may be appropriate for them.

For More Information:

- [The CMS Guide to Medicare Preventive Services](#)
- [Medicare Immunizations Billing Quick Reference Chart](#)
- [CMS Adult Immunizations Brochure](#)
- [Medicare Preventive Services Quick Reference Information Chart](#)
- [The CDC Vaccines and Immunizations Web Page](#)

Remember: The flu vaccine plus its administration are covered Part B benefits. The flu vaccine is NOT a Part D-covered drug.

For more information on coverage and billing of the flu vaccine and its administration, and related provider resources, visit [2011-2012 Provider Seasonal Flu Resources](#) and [Immunizations](#). For the 2011-2012 seasonal flu vaccine payment limits, visit http://www.CMS.gov/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/10_VaccinesPricing.asp.