



SAN DIEGO COUNTY FLU BULLETIN Number 4 – January 24, 2002

News for media on flu outbreaks, the availability of flu vaccine, and issues of interest.

1. Flu Activity:

San Diego County - There have been very few influenza isolates reported from sentinel physicians and emergency rooms in our county during this influenza season. The first reported influenza isolate of the season was confirmed in cell culture as influenza A (H3N2) on November 29, 2001. The good news is that further testing for strain typing done by the California State Department of Health Services Laboratory determined that the strain type is similar to the A/Panama (H3N2), which is one of the strains included in the current influenza vaccine.

Statewide:

For information about statewide flu activity visit: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/dcdc/vrdl/html/fluintro.htm>.

United States –

For information about flu activity in the United States please visit:
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/weekly.htm>.

2. Flu vaccine is available: It's not too late to get a flu shot!

Now is the time to receive an influenza vaccination. Although a portion of this year's influenza vaccine shipment was delayed, currently there **are** sufficient amounts of flu vaccine available in the community. Community members should first check with their health care provider. If vaccine is not available, they may check the website: www.sdchip.org or they may call the HHS flu hotline at **619 236-2351** and 760-940-6886 in **North County**.

3. Don't forget Pneumococcal Vaccination!

According to the National Coalition for Adult Immunizations (October 2000), pneumococcal disease accounts for approximately 500,000 cases of pneumonia and 50,000 cases of bacteremia each year in the United States. It is estimated *nationally* that only 38% of adults 65 years and older, and 8 – 10% of adults in high-risk groups, who should receive the vaccine have actually received it. Community members should ask their health care providers about pneumococcal vaccination. They may also check the website: www.sdchip.org to find a vaccine clinic in their area. Most individuals will need only one pneumococcal vaccination in their lifetime. If a person receives vaccine outside the medical home, it is important the primary healthcare provider be notified so it can be documented in the patient's medical record.

4. Is It Really the Flu?

Often what people call the flu is a cold or some other viral infection of the respiratory system. Now the public can get a free booklet that helps tell the difference and how to prevent these wintertime illnesses, as well as treatment options. The booklet is available from the **American Lung Association** at www.lungusa.org or by calling **toll-free 888-254-4054**. Flu symptoms often appear suddenly and include fever, cough, muscle aches, headaches, sore throat, chills and tiredness. A cold is a minor infection of the nose and throat that usually lasts for about seven to ten days.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Website: www.sdchip.org – listing of vaccine clinics, and a media section for this bulletin

MEDIA CONTACTS:

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The Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) is a collaboration of San Diego health care systems, hospitals, community clinics, insurers, physicians, universities and community benefit organizations that are committed to improved health for San Diego through collaboration and assessment.