

Flu Are You?

It's never too late to protect yourself against the Flu!

By Elizabeth Binsfield, RN

We may have crossed the threshold into a New Year and begun wishing for spring and warmer weather, but the flu season is still with us. And the flu vaccine is still available and being administered for anyone who needs it.

THE USUAL ROUTINE

Traditionally, flu shot clinics begin in September and October—not long after school is back in session and children are mingling again. By Thanksgiving, everyone is focused on the upcoming holidays, and many of those who haven't been vaccinated by this time have forgotten all about it. And if they do remember, they usually assume it's too late. But surprisingly, the flu season lingers long after the holidays have passed. In fact, the high point of flu season generally occurs well after the New Year, so you're not too late!

WHERE TO GO

There are plenty of locations where you can receive your flu vaccine. Your doctor's office is a reliable option (check to be sure they still have the vaccine available), as is your pharmacy (call ahead to determine whether your location is offering the vaccine.) Also, your local health department is likely offering free flu shot clinics to the community at various locations and times. A quick call to their office will help you locate the clinic most convenient to you. Many health departments even offer them in the office by appointment- free of charge and throughout the season. Walk-ins visits for the vaccine are usually discouraged, as appropriate staff isn't always on hand to assist those seeking vaccination. To be sure and to save yourself an unnecessary drive, always call your local office ahead of time to find out the particulars.

CHECK WITH THE EXPERT

Remember to check with your doctor to determine whether the flu vaccine is recommended for you. Some people who have certain allergies or medical conditions are not good candidates for the flu vaccine. For more information about the flu and the flu vaccine, you can check with your doctor. Or while online you can visit your local health department's website or flu.gov.

Be healthy!