

ROME MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE

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Get Your Flu Shots at Chestnut Commons

A seasonal flu shot clinic will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 8, at Chestnut Commons, 107 E. Chestnut St., sponsored by Rome Memorial Hospital. No appointment is necessary for adults, age 18 or older, to receive their flu shot. For children, parents should consult with their pediatrician.

The cost of the vaccination is \$25. Cash or check will be accepted. The hospital will bill Medicare Part B or Medicaid for those who bring their cards. The vaccine is not recommended for people who are allergic to eggs or who had a prior reaction to the vaccine. People with a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome, or other special circumstances, should check with their physician before receiving the vaccine.

CDC experts believe that immunity from vaccination (or infection) last season will have decreased by now in most people. It is not possible to say whether this reduced immunity would still be sufficient to prevent infection in 2011-2012 and therefore it is recommended that everyone 6 months of age and older get vaccinated this season, regardless of whether they were vaccinated last season.

“We have an ample supply of seasonal flu vaccine this year, so anyone who wants to reduce the risk of acquiring the flu should be vaccinated,” said Rome Memorial Hospital Chief Medical Officer Waleed Albert, M.D., an infectious disease specialist.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued the following recommendations:

- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as the 2010-2011 season vaccine is available.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.

- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated instead.

“Although many people think of the flu as just a bad cold, it really is a major illness,” Albert said. “In an average year, influenza is associated with about 20,000 deaths nationwide and many more hospitalizations, according to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

“It takes two weeks for the vaccination to take effect and people can still get the flu during those two weeks if they are exposed,” he continued. “That’s why some people who do get the flu right after getting the shot, blame the vaccine.”

People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting flu vaccine. If you are ill, talk to your doctor or nurse about whether to reschedule the vaccination. People with a mild illness can usually be vaccinated.

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