

HEALTH ADVISORY



Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road, Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



November 26, 2019
10:09AM

CHCC-PR-20-026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Protect Against the Flu: Vaccinate!”

As the CNMI enters flu season, Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) health care providers are seeing increasing rates of confirmed influenza cases. Therefore, the CHCC is urging all CNMI residents over 6 months old to get their annual flu vaccine, otherwise known as the “flu shot”.

Influenza is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death in rare cases. Every flu season is different, and the flu affects people differently. Each season, the seasonal flu vaccine is updated to better match the flu viruses that are expected to be most common during *that* flu season. Flu season typically starts in September of one year and ends the following spring, usually around late March. Therefore, it is important to get your flu shot every season - meaning if you have gotten the flu shot before June 2019, you need another flu shot for this *new* flu season.

Request a flu shot during a clinic visit at the following medical providers:

- CHCC Outpatient Clinics on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota
- Kagman Community Health Center
- Marianas Medical Center
- Medical Associates of the Pacific
- Pacific Medical Center
- Saipan Health Clinic

Or, walk in anytime during business hours to receive a flu shot at:

ADULTS: The CHCC Outpatient Pharmacy

- Located next to the laboratory on the Navy Hill campus on Saipan
- Open Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm, and weekends and Holidays from 8am to 5pm
- Phone: (670) 236-8798

ADULTS & CHILDREN: The CHCC Immunization Clinic

- Located on the lower level of the Navy Hill campus on Saipan through the door labeled “Public Health”
- Open 7:30am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday
- Phone: (670) 234-8950

It takes the body two weeks after getting the flu shot to have the right antibodies (your internal soldiers that fight off specific diseases) to fight off the flu virus. Getting the flu shot does **not** lead to getting the flu. There are times when people who have gotten the flu shot still get the flu, but those cases are still rarer than getting the actual flu infection. Moreover, even if those people are infected with the flu even after vaccination, they tend to not get as sick as those who get the flu and never been vaccinated with the flu shot beforehand.

The flu shot is not recommended for those under 6 months of age, who must instead rely on “herd immunity,” which means the people around them protect them from the flu by being vaccinated and staying healthy. Getting vaccinated helps to prevent the spread of the flu to the very young and very ill who may not be able to get the flu shot, such as those undergoing chemotherapy for cancer.

All pregnant women should get a flu shot, regardless of their trimester of pregnancy. A flu shot during pregnancy can help prevent the flu and its complications for both the mother and fetus, and protects the baby from the flu after birth.

The more people in the community who are vaccinated, the stronger the net of protection grows. Getting vaccinated not only protects you, but also your family, and everyone else with whom you may come into contact.

If you have any questions regarding flu vaccination, including where to get one, please contact the CHCC Immunization Clinic at:

- Saipan: 236-8745
- Tinian: 433-9263
- Rota: 532-9461

For more information about CHCC programs, please follow us on Facebook and Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/PressRelease.html>

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