



WETZEL COUNTY HOSPITAL

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: **GEORGE COUCH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
Date: **SEPTEMBER 22, 2009**
Phone: **304-455-8111**

WETZEL COUNTY HOSPITAL OFFERING FLU VACCINE

New Martinsville, WV – Wetzel County Hospital will be offering flu vaccine to the general public in the hospital's Outpatient Clinic Offices on the following dates and times, or until all of the Hospital's allocation of vaccine has been dispensed:

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| Tuesday, September 29 | 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm |
| Thursday, October 1 | 1:00 pm – 8:00 pm |
| Saturday, October 3 | 9:00 am – 12:00 Noon and 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm |
| Tuesday, October 6 | 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm |
| Thursday, October 8 | 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm |
| Saturday, October 10 | 9:00 am – 1:00 pm |
| Thursday, October 15 | 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm |
| Thursday, October 22 | 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm |
| Thursday, October 29 | 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm |

The vaccine will be offered on first-come, first-serve basis at a cost of \$15.00 per injection, which must be paid at the time of service. Only Medicare Part B and Medicare Advantage insurance plans will be billed and proof of insurance coverage must be presented at the time of service.

According to Wetzel County Hospital Infection Control Coordinator, Jenny Abbott, R.N., the flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Every year in the United States, on average: 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu; more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and; about 36,000 people die from flu. The best way to prevent this illness is by getting a flu vaccination each fall.

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In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting the flu can get vaccinated. However, certain people should get vaccinated each year. They are either people who are at high risk of having serious flu complications or people who live with or care for those at high risk for serious complications. People who are considered at “high risk” should get vaccinated each year are:

- People 65 years and older;
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities that house those with long-term illnesses;
- Adults and children 6 months and older with chronic heart or lung conditions, including asthma;
- Adults and children 6 months and older who needed regular medical care or were in a hospital during the previous year because of a metabolic disease (like diabetes), chronic kidney disease, or weakened immune system (including immune system problems caused by medicines or by infection with human immunodeficiency virus [HIV/AIDS]);
- Children 6 months to 18 years of age who are on long-term aspirin therapy. (Children given aspirin while they have influenza are at risk of Reye syndrome.);
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- All children 6 to 23 months of age;
- People with any condition that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions (that is, a condition that makes it hard to breathe or swallow, such as brain injury or disease, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other nerve or muscle disorders.)

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each fall. There are two types of vaccines:

The "flu shot" – an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

The nasal-spray flu vaccine – a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for “Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine”). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people 5 years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

About two weeks after vaccination, antibodies develop that protect against influenza virus infection. Flu vaccines will not protect against influenza-like illnesses caused by other viruses. October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but getting vaccinated in December or even later can still be beneficial. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May. For more information about the flu vaccine, call Jenny Abbott, Wetzel County Hospital Infection Control Coordinator at 304-455-8073.