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December not too late for inoculation

At-risk residents urged to schedule a flu shot

Anyone who thinks it is too late to get a flu shot should think again, public health officials say. Getting vaccinated in December or even later can still be beneficial, since most influenza activity occurs in January or later, and can last through the end of April.

The Oak Park Department of Public Health still has ample supplies of vaccine and is urging residents who have yet to get a flu shot to call 708.358.5601 and make an appointment.

Those in the high risk group – children ages six months to 59 months, and people age 50 or older – should get the shot annually, because the vaccine formula changes each year. Adults and children with long-term health problems of the heart, lungs or kidneys, women who will be pregnant during the flu season, and those in the health or child-care profession also are urged to get flu shots.

Pneumonia vaccinations are still available as well and are recommended in addition to a flu shot for those over the age of 65 and younger adults with chronic diseases of the heart and lungs.

Flu shots are available to residents for \$20 and pneumonia shots for \$30. Medicare B recipients must present their Medicare card to demonstrate eligibility for a free flu shot. Persons with Medicare HMO – or any other HMO – coverage should check with their insurer before scheduling an appointment with the Village as they should be eligible to receive their shots from their primary care provider. Both vaccinations are offered to Village residents only. Residents of neighboring communities should check with their own local government for participating vaccine providers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, between 5 percent and 20 percent of the U.S population gets the flu each year, and, on average, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized.

For more information on flu immunizations or to schedule an appointment, call 708.358.5601.

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