

# GRANT COUNTY

County Courthouse  
P.O. Box 37  
Ephrata, WA 98823  
(509) 754-6060



# HEALTH DISTRICT

1038 W. Ivy Avenue  
Moses Lake, WA 98837  
(509) 766-7960

## Media Release – Get Vaccinated (10/23/07)

Contact: Peggy Grigg, 509-754-6060, ext 26

As winter approaches, the season for influenza and other respiratory illnesses approaches. Flu shots and other immunizations are available to help keep you and your family healthier. Getting immunized helps protect you *and* the people you come in contact with.

Influenza or "flu" refers to respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses – not "stomach flu" (which is not really influenza at all). Each year, influenza and its complications cause death for more than 36,000 people in the United States. Getting vaccinated is the best way to avoid getting influenza.

There are 2 different ways to get vaccinated against the flu. Besides the traditional flu shot, another option for healthy (and non-pregnant) individuals from age 5 through 49 is a relatively new vaccine that is inhaled through the nose, avoiding discomfort of an injection into the muscle.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends flu vaccines be administered from September through March, or later. The majority of adults have antibody protection within 2 weeks after vaccination. Children aged 6 months through 8 years should receive 2 doses of vaccine (separated by 4 weeks for shots, and by 6 weeks for inhaled vaccine if they have not previously been vaccinated). Children of this age who received only 1 dose of vaccine during their first year of vaccination should receive 2 doses the next year.

Those who should get a flu vaccine include individuals who are at highest risk for problems from influenza, as well as the people who have close contact with them. Groups that should be vaccinated include:

- All children aged 6 months up to 5 years;
- All adults age 50 and over;
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- Children, adolescents and adults with chronic illnesses, those with medications or conditions that decrease their immune responses, and those taking long-term aspirin therapy;
- Residents of care facilities;
- Healthcare workers;
- Healthy individuals who live with or care for small children, elderly individuals, or any other groups that could develop complications from influenza.
- Anyone who wants to minimize their risk of influenza or its complications.

Individuals over 65 and others with certain other medical conditions should receive a pneumococcal pneumonia shot, if they have not had one before. A very limited number of conditions require a booster shot.

There is a new shot (Tdap) now available to prevent pertussis, or whooping cough, in adults. In the past, only children under the age of 7 were able to benefit from pertussis vaccines.

The Grant County Health District will be offering flu, pneumonia, and tdap shots this year at the following locations:

- Moses Lake Senior Center on Saturday, November 3, from 10 am to 2 pm;
- Columbia Ridge Elementary School (Ephrata), Thursday, November 8, from 4 to 7 pm.
- City Hall in George, Thursday, November 15, 11 am to 1 pm;
- Moses Lake Health District Office, Wednesdays starting November 14, 8:30 to 11am (no clinics December 24 through January 1);
- Ephrata Health District Office, Mondays, starting November 19, 1-4 pm (no clinics December 24 through January 1).

The American Lung Association website offers information on available flu shots in different local areas at <http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.aspx?c=aqKGLXOAIH&b=1015035>.

Helpful information regarding influenza is also available at:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/FluNews/influenza.htm>. For more information, please call the Grant County Health District (766-7960, 754-6060).