



# TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

>>>> NEWS RELEASE <<<<

*For Immediate Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Seasonal flu vaccinations begin for all TRICARE beneficiaries**

TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER — Seasonal flu vaccinations for all TRICARE-enrolled beneficiaries have begun at the Schofield Barracks Health Clinic and will begin Sept. 22 at Tripler Army Medical Center.

“The good news is that we received ample supplies of the seasonal flu vaccines early this year, in both the nasal spray and shot forms,” said Col. (Dr.) Michael Sigmon, chief of preventive medicine at Tripler.

“Our first priority is active duty Soldiers, especially those who are deploying soon. But we’ve received enough supplies to begin vaccinating Army family members and military retirees earlier than we did last year,” Sigmon said.

All TRICARE beneficiaries empanelled (enrolled) at the Schofield Health Clinic can get vaccinated without appointments at its family practice, immunization and pediatric clinics during normal business hours.

At Tripler, those 18 years and older can walk into the allergy and immunization clinic on Tuesdays (1 – 3 p.m.) and Wednesdays and Fridays (9 – 11:30 a.m.) beginning Sept. 22. Tripler pediatric and adolescent clinics are already vaccinating walk-ins and will conduct a special immunization event on Saturday, Sept. 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Beneficiaries are reminded to bring their military identification cards and immunization records for their vaccinations. More information is available from your primary care provider, the Oahu Joint Services Flu Hotline (433-1FLU) or the “Fight the Flu” web page on the Tripler website ([www.tamc.amedd.army.mil](http://www.tamc.amedd.army.mil)).

Sigmon, who chairs the Joint Public Health Emergency Working Group, said that the Air Force and Navy clinics on Oahu have also received their seasonal flu vaccine supplies and should be vaccinating all of their TRICARE beneficiaries soon. The Working Group annually coordinates the flu vaccination program for all the military services on Oahu.

“Vaccinations are just one way to protect you and your loved ones,” Sigmon said. “Frequent and thorough hand washing, proper cough etiquette, and staying at home until you have no fever for 24 hours are also very important, unless you’re a health care worker. Then it should be seven days.”

More information is available at the DHHS and CDC websites: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) and [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)

### **Why you should get the seasonal flu vaccine**

(from “*Seasonal Flu*” on U.S. Department of Health and Human Service website: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov))

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-related causes. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious flu complications. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination each year.

### **People who should get a seasonal flu vaccination each year include:**

(from “*Key Facts about Seasonal Influenza (Flu)*” on CDC website: [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) .

1. Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday
2. Pregnant women
3. People 50 years of age and older
4. People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
5. People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
6. People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
  - a. Health care workers
  - b. Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
  - c. Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

### **What actions can I take to protect myself and my family against both seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu this year?**

(from “*Questions & Answers about the 2009-2010 Flu Season*” on CDC website:

[www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

CDC recommends a yearly seasonal [flu vaccine](#) as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal flu. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three main seasonal flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season.

....The seasonal flu vaccine will not provide protection against the new H1N1 influenza. However a [2009 H1N1 vaccine](#) is currently in production and is expected to be ready for the public in the fall. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine.

In addition, there are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand rub can be used.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, [CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone](#) except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.