

PRESS RELEASE

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Health District Offers High Dose Flu Vaccine

Naugatuck Valley Health District has added a new high dose influenza vaccine formulation to the list of immunizations currently offered in the district's flu clinics.

The High-Dose vaccine is a flu shot, made up of the 3 flu strains most likely to cause illness for a particular flu season. The vaccine contains 4 times the amount of antigen (the part of the vaccine that prompts the body to make antibody) contained in regular flu shots. The additional antigen is intended to create a stronger immune response (more antibody) in the person getting the vaccine. It is the first flu vaccine designed specifically for patients 65 years of age and older.

Human immune defenses become weaker with age, which places older people at greater risk of severe illness from influenza. People 65 years of age and older are more likely to die or to be hospitalized from influenza and its complications than younger adults are. Recent studies have shown that they do not respond to the standard dose influenza vaccine as well as younger adults, because ageing decreases the body's ability to mount a good immune response after getting influenza vaccine. The higher dose of antigen in the vaccine is designed to give older people a better immune response and therefore better protection against flu.

High-Dose flu vaccine is approved for use in people 65 years of age and older. As with all flu vaccines, it is not recommended for people with a severe allergy to chicken eggs, or people who have had a severe reaction to a flu vaccine in the past. The vaccine is covered under Medicare Part B and will be administered during the health district's regularly scheduled flu clinics. Those who are eligible should bring the proper insurance cards.

According to the most recent CDC FluView report, influenza activity in the United States remains low, making this the ideal time to get vaccinated. It's best to get vaccinated before influenza activity begins so that you'll be protected once flu season starts in your community.

For more information regarding the district's flu clinic schedule and vaccines offered, please call Naugatuck Valley Health District, 881-3255, Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:00pm. The Naugatuck Valley Health District office is located at 98 Bank Street, Seymour, and serves residents of the municipalities of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Seymour and Shelton. ~~~~~ **-END-** ~~~~~