The Centers for Disease Control has issued new guidelines about who should be vaccinated this season. See the following summary, which was updated October 14, 2004:

The existing vaccine supply should be given to protect people who are at greatest risk of severe complications from the flu. If you are in this high-risk group and you are unable to get the vaccination, contact your local health department and/or your physician to ask about your options. Health departments throughout the country are working to ensure as many high risk people as possible can get the vaccine from a flu shot clinic or their regular providers.

- People 65 years of age and older
- Children ages 6 months to 23 months
- Adults and children 2 yrs of age and older with chronic lung or heart disorders including heart disease and asthma; with chronic diseases such as diabetes, kidney disease, blood disorders such as sickle cell anemia or weakened immune systems, including persons with HIV/AIDS
- Women who will be pregnant during the flu season
- Children and teenagers, 6 months to 18 years of age, who take aspirin daily
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- Household members and out-of-home caregivers of infants under the age of 6 months
- Healthcare workers who provide direct, hands-on care to patients

Who should go without the flu vaccination?

Healthy people 2 to 64 years of age are asked to postpone or skip getting a flu shot this year so available vaccine can protect those at greater risk of complications from the flu.

What about the nasal vaccine, FluMist?

The nasal spray flu vaccine is an option for healthy individuals ages 5 to 49 years of age. It is not recommended for healthcare workers caring for immunocompromised people and cannot be given to pregnant women.

Prevent the spread of flu and other infections by doing the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and dispose of the tissue afterward. If you don’t have a tissue, cover your cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands after you cough or sneeze with soap and warm water for 15 seconds (rub hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces; sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice to yourself). Or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer (rub your hands until the gel is dry).
- If you get the flu, stay home from work or school, get plenty of rest, and check with a health care provider as needed. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
Common symptoms of the flu include:

High fever, headache, extreme tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea (the last three more common in children)

?? Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread this way by contaminated hands. Some germs can live as long as 2 hours or more on doorknobs, desks and tables.
?? Practice good health habits: get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

**Pneumococcal Vaccination (PPV)** – This vaccine protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria; pneumococcal disease can lead to infections of the lungs (pneumonia), blood, and brain.

Adults who meet the following criteria may be eligible for vaccination:

?? Age 65 years or older
?? Age 18-64 years with any of the following conditions:

Cardiovascular disease (congestive heart failure)
Chronic pulmonary disease (emphysema, COPD); Not asthma.
Diabetes, Alcoholism, chronic liver disease
Sickle Cell Disease, No spleen
HIV Infection, leukemia, Hodgkin’s disease, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, generalized malignancy
Immunosuppressive chemotherapy, radiation therapy, long-term steroid use
Organ or bone marrow transplantation
Kidney Failure
Candidate for or recipient of a cochlear implant

?? Alaskan natives and certain Native American populations
?? For persons vaccinated when less than 65 years of age, re-vaccinate once after 5 years or more have elapsed since the initial vaccination.
?? A second dose is also recommended for people who

Have a damaged spleen or no spleen
Have sickle cell disease
Have HIV infection or AIDS
Have cancer, leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, kidney failure, organ or bone marrow transplant
Are taking medication that lowers immunity such as chemotherapy, long-term steroids

Anyone who thinks they may be eligible for this vaccine should contact their health provider, clinic or local health department.