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University Hospital news: February 1990 (Flu vaccine)

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The
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NEWS

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UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OFFERS FREE FLU VACCINE

Boston, Mass.--Because this year's flu epidemic has been more intense and widespread than in recent years, the University Hospital (UH) is offering its first mid-season flu-shot program for elderly and chronically ill adults. The vaccine will be given in the Hospital's outpatient department between 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. on February 15 and 16 and 20-23 at 88 East Newton Street.

According to experts, the flu season could last until April, and certain high-risk groups can still benefit from the vaccine. "We would like to encourage people in these groups who did not get their shots early in the season to come in immediately. They still can be exposed to the virus, and the shot can still protect them if they get it before exposure," says Anna Bissonnette, R.N., the associate director of UH's Home Medical Service, who is coordinating the program with the Hospital's emergency department.

Eligible for the free flu shots are people over 65 and chronically ill adults who suffer from lung or heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer or disease of the immune system.

"While for most people the flu means a few days of fever, chills, and congestion, for these risk groups it can be a more serious illness, requiring hospitalization and even leading to death," says Bissonnette. Each year thousands of Americans die as a result of the flu or complications associated with it.

She adds: "If we can prevent just one serious illness, it is worth our efforts."

UH, founded in 1855, is a principal teaching hospital of Boston University School of Medicine and a member of Boston University Medical Center.