FACT SHEET

Protect Yourself from the Flu

Prevent the Flu
Vaccination:
The single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each fall. Remember, it is important that healthcare workers, household members and other people in close contact with high-risk people, get the flu shot. In the absence of vaccine, however, there are other ways to protect against flu.

Antiviral Medications: Three antiviral drugs (amantadine, rimantadine, and oseltamivir) are approved and commercially available for use in preventing flu. All of these medications are prescription drugs, and a doctor should be consulted before the drugs are used for preventing the flu.

Five Steps to Good Health
The following steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like flu:

- *Avoid close contact*
  Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

- *Stay home when you are sick*
  If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

- *Cover your mouth and nose*
  Cover your mouth and nose with a **tissue** when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

- *Clean your hands*
  Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth*
  Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

What to Do If You Get Sick This Flu Season
If you develop the flu, it is advisable to get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco. Also, you can take medications to relieve the symptoms of flu (but *never* give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms – and particularly fever – without first speaking to your doctor.)

If, however, your flu symptoms are unusually severe (for example, if you are

having trouble breathing), you should consult your health-care provider right away.

If you are at special risk from complications of flu, you should consult your health-care provider when your flu symptoms begin. Your doctor may choose to use certain antiviral drugs to treat the flu.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu, or call the National Immunization Hotline at (800) 232-2522 (English), (800) 232-0233 (español), or (800) 243-7889 (TTY).