



NEWS RELEASE
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Flu vaccine to arrive in Army clinics soon
Officials hope to have everyone vaccinated by Dec. 31

HEIDELBERG, Germany – Influenza vaccine has begun arriving in Europe and will be distributed to Army medical facilities soon, signaling the start of an annual Army campaign to provide mandatory vaccinations for Soldiers and a full immunization program for all Army health care beneficiaries.

The Europe Regional Medical Command's Force Health Protection Office is finalizing plans for the 2007-2008 influenza season. Beneficiaries should begin looking for announcements about local vaccination programs in their garrison newspapers and local AFN affiliates in October. This year's goal is to immunize 95 percent of the Active Duty population by December 31.

One change for this year's program will be more widespread use in Europe of a form of the vaccine that resembles a nasal spray. Known commercially as FluMist®, this vaccine is recommended for most people age 5-49. The type of vaccine an individual receives will depend on age and contributing health factors, such as pregnancy or pre-existing allergies, officials said.

FluMist® was used last year in the United States, but was not used widely in the military population in Europe. In the past it was more susceptible to spoilage when transported over long distances. This year the manufacturer made it much more travel friendly, according to their shipping guidelines.

The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta publishes guidelines for influenza vaccinations, and the Army will follow those guidelines in its annual campaign. For more general information on influenza and the benefits of receiving the annual vaccination, visit their Web site at www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/.