



# NEWS RELEASE

## EUROPE REGIONAL MEDICAL COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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*Several reasons to get immunized early*  
**With holidays approaching, it pays to get influenza vaccine now**

**HEIDELBERG, Germany** –Thanksgiving kicks off a busy holiday season that runs through New Years Day. So now is a good time to head to your local health clinic and get immunized against the flu, health officials say.

“Most people take about two weeks to build up antibodies against the flu after receiving the vaccine. Cases of flu in Europe peak from December through March every year. Now is a good time to get the vaccine to build up antibodies before the holiday gatherings begin,” said Maj. Scott Newberg, plans officer for the Europe Regional Medical Command’s Force Health Protection Office.

Newberg also pointed out that the vaccine is mandatory for all Soldiers. He said that when a Soldier gets the flu vaccine, the unit must record that fact in a medical readiness tracking software application called the Medical Protection System. After January 1, Soldiers who have not had their vaccinations recorded in MEDPROS will come up on their commanders’ radar screen.

“It’s already a good idea to get the flu vaccine to protect your body from the illness. It makes sense to get the vaccine as early as you can, before your first sergeant has you on a list,” Newberg said.

Many units have already scheduled a time and place to vaccinate their Soldiers en masse. Soldiers who miss their unit’s event can contact their local health clinic for immunization hours. Many health facilities have walk-in hours. Also, many health facilities offer community immunization events at Commissaries and shopping complexes.

A list of all Army health facilities in Europe and their contact information is available at the ERMIC Web site at [www.healthcare.hqusaureur.army.mil](http://www.healthcare.hqusaureur.army.mil). Look for the link to Hospitals and Clinics.

