October— Flu Season—What’s in it for You?

The timing of flu is very unpredictable and can vary from season to season. Flu activity most commonly peaks in the U.S. between December and February. However, seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October and continue to occur as late as May.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine is designed to protect against the main flu viruses that research suggests will cause the most illness during the upcoming flu season. People should begin getting vaccinated soon after flu vaccine becomes available, ideally by October, to ensure that as many people as possible are protected before flu season begins. It takes about 2 weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu.

In addition to getting vaccinated, you can take everyday preventive actions like staying away from sick people and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs. If you are sick with flu, stay home from work or school to prevent spreading flu to others.

Flu vaccines are designed to protect against the main flu viruses that research suggests will be the most common during the upcoming season. Three kinds of flu viruses commonly circulate among people today: Influenza A (H1N1) viruses, influenza A (H3N2) viruses, and influenza B viruses. All of the 2014-2015 influenza vaccine is made to protect against the following three viruses:

- an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
- an A/Texas/50/2012 (H3N2)-like virus
- a B/Massachusetts/2/2012-like virus.

It is possible to get sick with the flu even if you have been vaccinated (although you won’t know for sure unless you get a flu test). This is possible for the following reasons:

- You may be exposed to a flu virus shortly before getting vaccinated or during the period that it takes the body to gain protection after getting vaccinated. This exposure may result in you becoming ill with flu before the vaccine begins to protect you.
- You may be exposed to a flu virus that is not included in the seasonal flu vaccine. There are many different flu viruses that circulate every year. The flu vaccine is made to protect against the three or four flu viruses that research suggests will be most common.

Unfortunately, some people can become infected with a flu virus the flu vaccine is designed to protect against, despite getting vaccinated. Flu vaccination is not a perfect tool, but it is the best way to protect against flu infection.

There will be two flu vaccine clinics on campus this fall in the UC:

**Students**—
Tuesday, October 7, 2014 from noon-2:00 p.m. in Room 232

**Faculty and Staff**—
Tuesday, October 21, 2014 from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. in Room 232

Fire Prevention Week—
October 5-11. This year focuses on testing smoke alarms in your home. Smoke spreads fast! Give yourself enough time to get out. Test your alarms to make sure they work!