

Flu Vaccination Rates Lower Than Expected

Flu vaccination rates among children and high-risk adults in the United States are much lower than expected. That means that millions of people would be unprotected if there's a major flu outbreak, says a report released Monday by the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health.

The latest online survey of 2,131 adults, ages 18 and older, was conducted in December. It found that among households with children ages 5 and younger, there was only a 36 percent vaccination rate. Another 18 percent of households said they still planned to vaccinate their children this season.

The poll also found that flu vaccination rates among high-risk adults -- those ages 50 and older and those with chronic diseases -- were well below national target levels.

So far this season, 26 states have reported moderate flu activity. There are about 40 million doses of flu vaccine still available and parents should get themselves and their children vaccinated, said Dr. Matthew M. Davies, director of the National Poll on Children's Health.

"National efforts to prevent an influenza epidemic in the U.S. hinge on broad flu vaccination of the public before flu season hits," David said in a prepared statement.
