



Bulletin No. 13

June 30, 1975

INFLUENZA

Cases of influenza occur in Alaska every year. There has been a great variation in the incidence and the geographic extent within the state. Periodically, influenza has become epidemic. This appears to occur when antibody levels wane or when the antigens of prevalent influenza viruses have changed enough to render the population susceptible. Nationally, more epidemics are caused by type A influenza viruses than by type B, and type A epidemics are generally more severe.

The best available means of protection against influenza has been inactivated influenza vaccine. The vaccine has been variably effective and the vaccine induced antibody appears to be relatively short-lived. Consequently, people in high-risk groups should be vaccinated annually regardless of the amount of influenza expected within the state. In this way, those at particular risk can maintain the highest possible level of protection.

Influenza control through widespread vaccination of the general population has not been a public health objective because of the variable effectiveness of available influenza vaccines. A low frequency of serious complications from the disease has occurred in healthy people in the general population.

### **Bivalent Vaccine**

The bivalent influenza vaccine this year will contain type A and type B influenza viruses representative of currently prevalent strains. **Influenza vaccine should be administered by mid-November.**

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations of the Public Health Service advisory committee on immunization practices are as follows: 1. Annual vaccination is strongly recommended for persons who have such chronic conditions as: a. heart disease of any etiology, b. chronic bronchopulmonary diseases, such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, tuberculosis and emphysema, c. chronic renal disease and, d. diabetes mellitus and other chronic metabolic disorders. 2. Annual vaccination is recommended for older persons, particularly those over age 65 because influenza outbreaks are commonly associated with excess mortality in older age groups. 3. Vaccination may be considered for persons who provide essential community services if local priorities justify.