Flu shots are good protection for people

 $DEAR ABB \overline{Y}$: Each year in the United States, influenza kills 36,000 people and hospitalizes 110,000 more. Influenza's impact could be greatly reduced if your readers would put "schedule flu vaccination" on their to-do lists to-

The vaccine is extremely effective. Despite this, many people for whom flu vaccine is recom-



mended fail to get immunized. Some presumptions that keep people from being vaccinated: MYTH 1: The flu shot can give

you the flu. FACT: The influenza shot cannot give you the flu. The injectable vaccine is made from "killed" influenza virus.

MYTH 2: If you don't get the vaccine in October or November, it's too late.

FACT: Although it's best to be vaccinated in October or November for maximum protection throughout the flu season, people who are immunized in December, January and February are protected.

MYTH 3: Only people 65 and older need the influenza vaccine.

FACT: Flu vaccine is recommended for everyone age 50 and older. But ANYONE 6 months or older can benefit from it. It's hard to believe, but children 24 months and younger are hospitalized with flu complications at the same rate as people 65 and older.

The following are some of the people for whom influenza vaccine is recommended in the United States:

(1) People 50 and older.

(2) Anyone 6 months and older who has medical problems such as heart or lung disease (including asthma), diabetes, kidney disease or a weak immune system.

(3) Women who will be 14 or more weeks pregnant between December and March, which is flu season.

(4) Health-care workers.

(5) Caregivers who work with or live with people with the problems listed above.

(6) Anyone who wants to avoid the risk of spreading the flu (and its possible complications) to a loved one or friend. Flu vaccine protects not only you, but also the people you care about.

A nasal spray form of influenza vaccine is newly licensed in the U.S. this year. For more information about it, your readers should consult their health-care professionals. — DEBORAH WEX-LER, M.D., EXECUTIVE DI-**RECTOR, IMMUNIZATION** ACTION COALITION

DEAR DR. WEXLER: Thank you for your timely reminder. From personal experience, I can

say that neither I nor my husband has contracted the flu since we began getting flu shots. Other excellent candidates who should consider being immunized include police and fire personnel, teachers, bus drivers, and people who come in contact with the public.

Readers, if you have questions about influenza vaccine, or any other vaccine, you can find reliable information by calling the National Immunization Information Hotline: (800) 232-2522, or visit the Web site: www.vaccineinformation.org.

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15 29 MAX John Heard. A 'PG-13' 🖾 dren & Their Rescuers During WWII'' Weiss, Peter C		15 29 MAX (5:15) ★★½ "Batman Forever" (1995) Val Kilmer, Tommy Lee Jones. ★★★ "Wendigo" (2001, Horror) Pa- tricia Clarkson, Jake Weber. 'R' (III) ★★★ "Pretty Woman" (1990, Comedy-Dram Richard Gere, Julia Roberts. △ 'R' (III) 16 44 CPK Deal TV Q Divid Data Divid Data Divid Data Divid Data
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20 34 USA ★ ★ ½ "Casino (1995, Drama) Robert De Niro, Sharon Stone. [Li 21 24 SHOW ★ ★ ½ "Made" (2001) Jon Favreau, Vince Vaughn. iTV. ∩ 'R' @ (:35) ★ ★ ½ "Orange County" (2002) Colin Hanks, Jack Black. @ ★ ★ "The Others" (2001, Christopher Eccleston. iTV	Horror) Nicole Kidman.	21 24 SHOW (5:30) ★ "Rock My World" (2002) Peter O'Toole, Joan Plowright. 'R' (:25) ★★★ "The Sum of All Fears" (2002) Ben Af- fleck, Morgan Freeman. iTV. ∩ 'PG-13' @ "The Original Latin Kings of Co dy" (2002, Comedy) iTV. ∩ 'R' [
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