

# Beat the flu this winter

Private sector releases first vaccinations to meet growing demand ahead of 2011 flu season March 2011.



You might not think that washing your hands properly can help you avoid influenza, but it does. (Image: Wikimedia Commons)

With South Africa's flu season set to be in full swing by May this year, Sanofi Pasteur, one of the world's largest providers of seasonal influenza vaccines, has released the first batch of flu vaccine in South Africa for 2011.

In addition to 277 000 doses of mostly monovalent (single strain) flu vaccines made available by the Western Cape Health Department late January, Sanofi Pasteur has released 200 000 doses countrywide. A further 295 000 doses of trivalent (multiple strain) adult vaccines was released by the company in late February.

Equipped with a heat monitoring device, claimed to be the first of its kind in SA, the company's new HeatMarker, which is attached to the outer carton of the vaccines, accurately monitors the effect of time and temperature on vaccines. This is designed to ensure safety for consumers and healthcare providers whilst also significantly decreasing vaccine wastage.

## Young children, the elderly, those with underlying medical conditions most at risk

Commenting on the pending flu season, general manager of Sanofi Pasteur, Dr. Jean-Antoine Zinsou says, "It's difficult to predict what will happen in South Africa in 2011. We do know that some countries in the northern hemisphere are experiencing a severe flu season caused by H1N1 and H3N2. The same flu strains are expected to circulate in South Africa this coming flu season."

Consumer groups most vulnerable to influenza include young children, the elderly, and people with underlying medical conditions like diabetes, pulmonary and cardiac diseases. The consequences of flu for chronic disease sufferers if untreated can be severe and result in extensive hospitalisation and death.

With the increasing prevalence of seasonal influenza and the winter season looming, Sanofi health experts advise consumers to, in addition to vaccinating early, observe correct coughing etiquette, wash their hands, and stay indoors even if mildly ill for a minimum of 24 hours or until all symptoms have passed.

Sanofi Pasteur's flu vaccine with the HeatMarker is available nationwide at UTI Pharma depots in Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. For more information, go to [www.sanofipasteur.com](http://www.sanofipasteur.com) or call +27 (0) 11 256 3700.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>