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Novartis to ship 30 mn flu vaccine to US

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Singapore: Novartis plans to ship around 30 million doses of its influenza vaccines including Fluvirin and Flucelvax to customers in the US market for the 2013-2014 season.

In clinical studies, both vaccines demonstrated safety and were shown to help protect against WHO-identified strains of the influenza virus.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends routine seasonal influenza vaccination for all individuals 6 months of age and older. In addition, the CDC advises that it is especially important for certain high-risk groups to receive an influenza vaccine each season, including: people over the age of 50; children under the age of 5; people with chronic illnesses; people with immunosuppression; and residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

"Last year's flu season, which peaked early and was intense, is a significant reminder of the importance of annual seasonal flu vaccination," said Dr. William Schaffner, professor of medicine and preventive medicine at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. "The CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination for all adults, and getting a flu vaccine is an important step in protecting one's health."

"Each year, Novartis is proud to help meet a significant public health need by providing its seasonal flu vaccines to enable healthcare providers and pharmacists to help protect individuals and families from the flu," said Mr. Brent MacGregor, President of US Vaccines and Head of Region North America. "We are pleased to offer a portfolio of flu vaccines that includes Flucelvax, which reflects how we are rethinking flu vaccination with a new approach to vaccine production and which offers a

choice to consumers."

Flucelvax is manufactured using innovative cell-culture technology, a process that differs from the traditional influenza vaccine manufacturing process, which occurs in chicken eggs. Cell-culture technology offers several potential benefits, including flexibility in the manufacturing process, creating potential for rapid scalability in the event of a pandemic, and an alternative flu vaccine supply. Flucelvax does not contain any preservatives or antibiotics.