

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
January 10, 2013

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ENCOURAGES FLU VACCINATIONS TO CURTAIL ILLNESS**  
*~Vaccinations available statewide~*

**TALLAHASSEE** – Though flu season has already started, the Florida Department of Health encourages unvaccinated residents and visitors to get vaccinated against influenza (flu). Compared with most other viral respiratory infections, such as the common cold, influenza infection often causes a more severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

“It is not too late to get vaccinated against the flu, and we encourage anyone age six months and older to get a flu shot,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Influenza A is the most common flu type in Florida this season and is countered by the vaccine.”

Be sure to watch for symptoms of the flu, such as headache, fever, a severe cough, runny nose or body aches. Contact your primary care physician or a local hospital immediately if symptoms appear. This is particularly important for people at high risk for serious complications from flu. For those with the flu, antiviral medication may shorten both the duration and severity of illness.

The Florida Department of Health urges the following preventive steps for the flu:

- Get vaccinated EVERY YEAR because as the flu types change, the vaccine changes.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, because germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, contact your primary care physician to determine whether you need antiviral medication. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone (except to get medical care or for other necessities).

To locate flu vaccine, contact your County Health Department at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdsitelist.htm>.

DOH protects, promotes and improves the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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