

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **FLORIDA FLU SEASON IN FULL SWING**

*~Floridians asked to remain vigilant about their health~*

**TALLAHASSEE-** Flu season is in full swing, and the Florida Department of Health aims to provide the most up-to-date information on influenza in the state, including accessibility of vaccines and antiviral medications. The Department continues to work in concert with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and urges all Floridians to get vaccinated and closely monitor their health throughout this flu season. Individuals currently experiencing signs and symptoms of the flu should contact their primary care provider, to discuss the need for evaluation and antiviral treatment.

Vaccines are available within various communities throughout Florida, and the [flu vaccine locator](#) may be helpful in identifying community providers that have vaccine. The influenza vaccine remains the most important and effective means of preventing the flu. It is important to become vaccinated each year, as the strains of flu virus change from year to year. This year's vaccine closely matches the circulating flu strains and it is not too late to be vaccinated.

Antiviral treatment is recommended at the onset of symptoms for any patient with confirmed or suspected influenza who is hospitalized, has severe, complicated or progressive illness, or is at higher risk for influenza complications. This includes children ages less than 5 (especially, less than 2); pregnant women; those older than 65; and those with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, emphysema, heart disease, diabetes, neurological disorders and cancer.

When indicated, antiviral treatment should be started as soon as possible after illness onset, ideally within 48 hours of the first sign of symptoms. However, antiviral treatment may still be beneficial in patients with severe, complicated, or progressive illness and in hospitalized patients when started after 48 hours of illness onset.

Medical studies show that early antiviral treatment may:

- shorten the duration of fever and illness symptoms;
- reduce the risk of complications from influenza (e.g., ear infections in young children, pneumonia, respiratory failure) and death; or
- shorten the duration of hospitalization.

Some parts of the country have reported intermittent shortages of a pediatric formulation of antiviral medication (Tamiflu oral suspension). To date, Florida has not experienced significant shortages and alternative formulations of antivirals are readily available if needed for use in the pediatric population. The Florida Department of Health is communicating with antiviral manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors, and the Florida Pharmacy Association, to monitor any potential shortages.

The Florida Department of Health continues to work the CDC and FDA and will provide updates to all Floridians as needed.

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

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