

Feb. 24, 2016

## FLU SEASON IS HERE – FLU VACCINE KEY TO PROTECTING FLORIDA’S FAMILIES



### Contact:

Communications Office

[NewsMedia@flhealth.gov](mailto:NewsMedia@flhealth.gov)

850-245-4111

**Tallahassee, Fla.**—It's not too late to get your flu shot! Flu season may have started slowly, but we are now seeing increased influenza activity throughout the U.S. and Florida, particularly in children. Increased activity in children typically comes ahead of increased influenza activity in other age groups.

"It is crucial for Floridians to get vaccinated to help protect themselves and others from influenza," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "Floridians who do contract influenza should seek medical care early in the course of illness because medications exist that can reduce the number of days spent with the flu."

The Florida Department of Health continues to urge residents to reduce their risk of severe outcome from infection by getting vaccinated against influenza. It is not too late to get vaccinated. The flu vaccine is safe and remains the best way to protect yourself and others from the flu.

All individuals six months of age and older should receive the flu vaccine every year. The flu vaccine is offered in many locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, retail stores, pharmacies, health centers and by many employers and schools. Click [here](#) to search for a flu vaccine location.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has received reports of poor outcomes from influenza infection, particularly in unvaccinated people. Clinicians are reminded to use antiviral medication to treat suspected influenza in high-risk patients, those with progressive disease, and all hospitalized patients as soon as possible as these medications are most effective when administered early.

This is particularly important for individuals at high risk of severe complications from influenza, such as:

- People 65 years of age and older;
- Pregnant women;
- Children under the age of 5;
- Immunocompromised individuals; and
- People with chronic medical conditions.

Antiviral use is also important for prevention for people who have been vaccinated for less than two weeks and for unvaccinated people caring for those at high risk such as employees of hospitals, clinics and nursing homes.

For further information regarding influenza surveillance information, messaging and guidance, visit the influenza homepage at [www.floridahealth.gov/floridaflu](http://www.floridahealth.gov/floridaflu).

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).