



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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There's Still Time To Get A Flu Shot

National Influenza Vaccination Week December 2-8, 2018

SPRINGFIELD – If you haven't received a flu shot yet, it's not too late. While it's best to get vaccinated against the flu in October, you can still get a flu shot. Flu activity is usually highest between December and February, although activity can last as late as May.

“Even healthy people can get the flu,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “And while healthy people may not suffer serious illness from the flu, they can pass the virus to babies too young to be vaccinated, people who have chronic illnesses, and others who may develop serious health problems like pneumonia. Before you get together with grandkids and grandparents for the holidays, make sure you not only protect yourself from the flu, but your loved ones as well.”

During the 2017-2018 flu season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates flu caused:

- 49 million flu illnesses – more than the combined populations of Texas and Florida
- 960,000 flu hospitalizations – more than the number of staffed hospital beds in the United States
- 79,000 deaths – more than the average number of people who attend the Super Bowl each year

Flu symptoms can include fever or feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, tiredness, and some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

Flu is typically spread by droplets when someone with the flu talks, coughs, or sneezes. People can also get the flu by touching something, like a door handle, that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

On average, it's about two days after being exposed to the flu before symptoms begin. However, you can pass the flu to someone roughly a day before you start experiencing those symptoms, and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

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Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctor visits, missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. It may also make your illness milder if you do get sick.

Getting vaccinated is the first and most important step in protecting you and those around you against flu viruses. In addition to getting a flu shot, IDPH recommends following the 3 C's: clean, cover, and contain.

- **Clean** – frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- **Cover** – cover your cough and sneeze.
- **Contain** – contain your germs by staying home if you are sick.

Influenza antiviral drugs can be a second line of defense for treatment of some who get sick with the flu. Many observational studies have found that in addition to lessening the duration and severity of symptoms, antiviral drugs can prevent flu complications. Because it is important to start antiviral medication quickly, high-risk patients should contact a health care professional at the first signs of influenza symptoms, which include sudden onset of fever, aches, chills, and tiredness.

To find a location to get a flu shot in your community, check with your health care provider or local health department. You can also use the online [Vaccine Finder](#).

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