



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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It's Not Too Late To Get A Flu Shot

Flu continues to circulate

SPRINGFIELD – The influenza activity level in Illinois remains widespread. Similar to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) reports the number of influenza-related ICU admissions, influenza-related pediatric deaths, and influenza outbreaks. The most recent report shows 1032 influenza-related ICU admissions, two influenza-related pediatric deaths, and 285 influenza outbreaks. Weekly reports can be found at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/surveillance>.

“The most common influenza strain circulating in Illinois and across the country has been an influenza A strain—H3N2, which tends to cause more severe illness,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “However, other strains—influenza B, can become more common later in the season. If you still have not gotten a flu shot, it’s not too late. The vaccine will help protect you and those around you from the flu strains circulating this season.”

Getting a flu shot can also reduce flu illnesses, doctors’ visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. The more people who get vaccinated, the more people will be protected from flu, especially those who may not be able to be vaccinated, such as babies under six months. Anyone can get the flu, even healthy people. Getting a flu shot is the first and most important step in protecting you and those around you against flu viruses.

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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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 used 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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