



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Flu Season Arrives in Ohio; Time to get Vaccinated

Ohio Flu Activity Remains Sporadic

COLUMBUS – Flu season has officially begun in Ohio. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone six months old and older get the flu vaccine-to protect against seasonal flu viruses. In Ohio, flu season begins in October and runs through spring, with cases typically spiking between December and February. Ohio’s flu activity currently remains sporadic, meaning that there have only been a small number of confirmed influenza cases across the state.

“Influenza vaccination is the safest and most effective way to fight the flu, and October is the perfect time to get vaccinated,” said ODH Medical Director Dr. Mary DiOrio. “Flu vaccination is especially important for older people, young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions who are more vulnerable to serious flu complications.”

Flu vaccination can reduce the need for doctors’ visits and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. During the 2015-16 flu season, 3,558 Ohioans were hospitalized after contracting the flu.

Flu vaccination is available at most healthcare providers’ offices, local health departments and retail pharmacies, and there is an ample supply across Ohio at this time.

It takes about two weeks for flu vaccination to take full effect. CDC says that flu vaccines have been updated to better match circulating viruses. CDC is recommending that the nasal spray flu vaccine should not be used during the 2016-17 flu season due to its low effectiveness in recent years.

Symptoms of influenza can include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Although most people fully recover from the flu, some experience severe illness like pneumonia and respiratory failure, and the flu can be fatal. Anyone who becomes ill with the flu and is pregnant, has an underlying medical condition, is older than 65 years old or younger than 2 years old, or experiences a particularly severe form of the illness should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

Ways to avoid getting or spreading the flu include washing hands frequently; covering coughs and sneezes with tissues, or coughing or sneezing into elbows; avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth; and staying home when sick and until fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication.

More information about influenza and flu activity in Ohio is available at www.flu.ohio.gov.

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NOTE TO NEWS MEDIA – ODH tracks flu activity in Ohio, including monitoring the number of flu-associated hospitalizations. So far this season, Flu-associated hospitalization data is posted every Friday [here](#). ODH’s annual flu vaccination public awareness campaign is now running across Ohio. The campaign features a new television advertisement ([watch here](#)) and radio spots. The campaign will run until the end of January.