



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Prevent Flu this Season by Getting a Flu Shot

SACRAMENTO - California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith is urging Californians to get vaccinated against influenza (the flu) as soon as possible. Localized flu activity has already been [reported in San Diego County](#), where an elderly person has died due to flu-related complications.

In California, flu usually begins to increase in late November or December. It takes a couple of weeks after vaccination for the body to respond fully, so now is the time to get vaccinated to have the best protection as the flu season begins.

“Deaths related to flu are tragic reminders that the flu virus needs to be taken very seriously,” said Dr. Smith. “A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect against infection and prevent others from coming down with the flu.”

A person with flu may be contagious and infect others before they even feel sick.

This season your health care provider may be offering only injectable flu vaccines. This is due to concerns about the effectiveness of this year’s nasal spray vaccine. CDPH expects there to be enough injectable vaccine to meet the expected demand.

Each year, flu causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and, sometimes, tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.

To reduce this threat CDPH recommends an annual flu shot for everyone six months of age and older, including pregnant women. Flu shots are needed every year to maintain the greatest protection, because the vaccine changes each season to match the viruses that are circulating.

Common symptoms of the flu include fever or feeling feverish, a cough and/or sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, chills, fatigue and body aches. Children may also have nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

To stop the spread of flu and other respiratory illnesses, you should also:

- Stay home when you are sick and limit your contact with others
- Cover your coughs or sneezes with your sleeve or a disposable tissue
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

CDPH encourages Californians to contact their health care provider, physician's office, clinic or pharmacy about obtaining the flu vaccine. Some local health departments may also offer low- or no-cost flu immunizations. More [information about the flu](#) is available on the CDPH website. You can find the nearest flu vaccine locations by visiting www.flu.gov.

www.cdph.ca.gov