



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Influenza Cases are Increasing in California Health Officials Encourage Californians to Get Vaccinated**

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today announced that flu activity in California is widespread and at levels usually seen at the peak of the influenza season. Health officials encourage Californians to get vaccinated.

“With the increase in influenza impacting many communities across the entire state, it is important to get a flu shot now if you have not done so already,” said CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith. “Although influenza season usually peaks between December and February, flu activity can occur as late as May, which means it is not too late to get vaccinated.”

It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body to respond fully. Vaccine effectiveness does vary for the different strains and year by year. Data will be available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in February about vaccine effectiveness.

“Vaccination will prevent infection in a large number of cases. If disease does occur after vaccination, the vaccine can reduce the severity of flu symptoms,” said Dr. Smith. “Getting the flu shot is still the best way to protect yourself and others from flu.”

Some people are at high risk for serious flu-related complications that can lead to hospitalization and even death including:

- Pregnant women
- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- People 65 years of age and older
- People who have certain medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

For those at high risk of serious flu complications, getting vaccinated is especially important. It is also important for caregivers of anyone at high risk including children younger than 6 months, who are too young to get a flu vaccine.

Individuals in a high-risk group that experience [symptoms of flu](#) (fever, chills and feeling very tired accompanied by sore throat, muscle or body aches, headaches, or nasal congestion), should contact their health care provider early in the illness. Antiviral drugs can be prescribed by a physician, and work best if started within two days of getting sick. Individuals who are not in high risk groups and who have mild illness typically do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. These individuals should stay home and avoid contact with other people. Anyone who experiences more severe symptoms such as trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, difficulty eating or drinking, or confusion should contact their health care provider or seek emergency care.

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

- Stay home while sick and limit contact with others
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve or disposable tissue
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

CDPH closely tracks influenza and posts updated information on the [CDPH Influenza website](#) at the end of the work week. As of the most recent report, for the week ending December 30, 2017, 27 influenza-associated deaths in persons under 65 years of age were reported to CDPH. Only influenza deaths in persons less than 65 years are reported to CDPH so the total number of deaths due to influenza is higher.

Flu vaccine is available in many locations, including doctors' offices, health departments, pharmacies, health centers and travel clinics, as well as at many employers and schools. Use the [HealthMap Vaccine Finder](#) at to find the nearest location where you and your family can get vaccinated.

For more information about [influenza, visit CDPH's website](#).

[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)