



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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It's not too late: Michiganders urged to get flu vaccine this winter

LANSING, Mich. – This week is National Influenza Vaccination Week and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is reminding Michigan residents that it's not too late to get vaccinated. Since COVID-19 and flu are likely to spread simultaneously this winter, all Michiganders aged 6 months and older should get their annual flu vaccine if they have not already.

“As we continue fighting to eradicate COVID-19, it's crucial that all Michiganders get their flu vaccine to protect themselves and keep our hospitals from being overwhelmed,” said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. “As the weather gets colder and people spend more time inside, I urge everyone to get their flu vaccine, and make sure your kids get one too. I got my flu shot a few months ago – it's quick, simple and crucial in helping us fight COVID-19. Remember, Michiganders: mask up, practice safe social distancing and wash your hands frequently to protect yourselves, your family and our brave frontline workers from the pandemic.”

“Nearly 3 million Michiganders have received the flu vaccine this season,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health for MDHHS. “It's great progress, but there's still more work to be done. We need to prevent a surge of flu cases while we are in the middle of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. National Influenza Vaccination Week serves as reminder to those who have not received the flu vaccine that there's still time to protect themselves and their family against flu and serious flu complications, like pneumonia.”

The state is more than 66 percent towards its goal of 4.2 million flu vaccinations this season. Although the nation recorded 39 to 56 million estimated cases of the flu, 18 to 26 million medical visits due to the flu and nearly half a million hospitalizations during the 2019-2020 flu season, according to data from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry only 31.6 percent (about 3.2 million) of Michigan residents reported receiving a flu vaccine last season. Michigan ranks 38th in the nation for flu vaccination coverage and falls below the national average of 51.8 percent.

Despite its comparison to the common cold, the flu is a very serious and potentially deadly disease, especially for children, older people and those with chronic health conditions. Last season, 195 children died from the flu in the United States, including six children in Michigan.

The Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) also reminds Michiganders that flu shots are an essential health benefit under the Affordable Care Act and are covered with no out-of-pocket costs by most health plans in Michigan. Consumers with questions about

their coverage should contact their insurance company, and if they cannot get the information they need or have additional questions, contact DIFS for assistance 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at 877-999-6442 or [Michigan.gov/HealthInsurance](https://www.michigan.gov/HealthInsurance).

“Getting the annual flu shot is an important step to protect your health and the health of those around you, especially this year when flu symptoms may be confused with COVID-19, and DIFS is committed to ensuring that cost and coverage are not barriers that keep Michiganders from getting vaccinated,” said DIFS Director Anita Fox. “Expanding access to health insurance and health care is critical to the health of our state, and our consumer service representatives are available to answer insurance coverage questions and concerns.”

While flu activity indicators have been low so far this flu season, some flu activity has been reported throughout the state. It’s essential that we continue to take all precautionary measures such as social distancing, wearing a mask, washing our hands thoroughly and especially getting a flu vaccine to protect ourselves and our healthcare resources as COVID-19 continues to spread. It takes about two weeks after the vaccine is administered before the body builds up enough immunity to prevent the flu. Michiganders should get their flu vaccine now to protect themselves before activity increases in Michigan.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends annual influenza vaccination for all persons aged 6 months and older. There are many flu vaccine options available this season, and residents should speak with a healthcare provider about which is best for them.

There is ample supply of flu vaccines available at many locations throughout Michigan, including doctor’s offices, pharmacies and local health departments. To find a location near you, visit [Vaccinefinder.org](https://www.vaccinefinder.org). For more information about flu activity in Michigan, visit [Michigan.gov/Flu](https://www.michigan.gov/Flu).

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