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MDHHS recognizes National Influenza Vaccination Week Dec. 4-8

Michigan residents urged to get flu vaccine

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is recognizing National Influenza Vaccination Week this week and reminding Michigan residents that it's not too late to get flu, COVID-19 and RSV vaccines. All three of these vaccines can help protect against respiratory illnesses and can be given at the same time.

"Vaccines against respiratory illnesses are the best way to protect yourself and your families against the anticipated surge of these illnesses over winter months," said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive. "It is not too late to get vaccinated this season -- please get your flu, COVID-19 and RSV vaccines (if eligible) today to prevent yourself from the potentially severe consequences of influenza and other respiratory illnesses this holiday season and to help prevent further burden on our health care system."

While it is ideal to get a flu vaccine before flu starts spreading in your community (usually in October each year), getting vaccinated is beneficial anytime flu viruses are circulating. Respiratory virus activity is beginning to increase nationally, which is why getting vaccinated now can still provide protection. Flu activity usually peaks in February, but significant flu activity can continue into May.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual influenza vaccination for all persons ages 6 months and older with rare exceptions. According to data from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry, as of Nov. 18, approximately 2.2 million people in Michigan have received their flu vaccine for the 2023-2024 flu season, which is 55% towards the state's goal of reaching 4 million doses of flu vaccine administered this season.

For people younger than 65 years, CDC recommends any flu vaccine available during the 2023-2024 flu season. Options for this age group include inactivated flu vaccine, recombinant flu vaccine or live-attenuated flu vaccine for those ages 2-49.

Vaccination is particularly important for individuals at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, including young children, adults ages 65 years and older, people with certain chronic medical conditions and pregnant persons. Some children ages 6 months through 8 years will need two doses of flu vaccine this season to be fully protected.

Individuals should speak with their health care provider to determine which vaccine is best for them.

It takes about two weeks after the vaccine is administered before the body builds up enough immunity to protect from severe illness from the flu. Michiganders should get their vaccine now to protect themselves before flu activity peaks in Michigan.

The Michigan 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.

“As the weather gets colder and Michiganders spend more time inside, getting a flu shot can help keep you and your family healthy without missing time from work or school,” said DIFS Director Anita Fox. “Most health plans cover flu shots at no cost, so I urge you to get your vaccine and to make sure that your kids and other family members are also protected.”

Michiganders with questions about their health insurance can contact DIFS at 877-999-6442 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or online at Michigan.gov/HealthInsurance.

Flu vaccines are widely available now at local health departments, physician offices and pharmacies around the state. Find a location near you using the Vaccine Finder. Visit Michigan.gov/flu for more information or visit IVaccinate.org to find answers to vaccine questions.

Visit Michigan.gov/CovidFluRSV and Michigan.gov/flufocus for updates on flu and respiratory illnesses in Michigan.

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