



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 10, 2018

PH18-048

CONTACT: Corey Egel | 916.440.7259 | CDPHpress@cdph.ca.gov

Fight Flu this Season by Getting Immunized

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) urges Californians to get the influenza (flu) vaccine to protect your health during the upcoming flu season.

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

“Getting vaccinated is the best line of defense against flu,” said Dr. Karen Smith, CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer. “You can prevent missing work or school, visits to the doctor or hospitalization, and protect others from coming down with the flu.”

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

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), during the 2016–2017 season, flu immunization prevented an estimated 5.3 million illnesses, 2.6 million medical visits, and 85,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations in the United States.

Flu vaccines are administered as a shot or nasal spray. For the 2018-19 flu season, the CDC recommends vaccination with no preference for any one vaccine over another.

CDPH recommends the annual flu vaccination for everyone six months of age and older. While anyone can get flu, pregnant women, children under five, adults 65 years of age and older, and people with chronic conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes and asthma are [particularly at risk](#) for flu-related complications. Flu vaccinations are needed every year to maintain the greatest protection because the vaccine changes each year to match circulating viruses and annual vaccination boosts immunity.

For pregnant women, flu complications can include premature birth, low birth weight, and stillbirth of the baby. Besides helping prevent flu complications, flu vaccine given during pregnancy also helps protect babies from flu infection for several months after birth, before the baby can be immunized, which is a time that babies are at high risk for flu complications.

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 while sick and limit contact with others.
- Cover coughs or sneezes 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 encourages Californians to contact their health care provider, physician's office or clinic about getting the flu vaccine. When flu vaccine is in stock, adults with Medi-Cal can also get immunized at the pharmacy where they generally pick up their prescriptions. Some local health departments may also offer low- or no-cost flu immunizations.

For more information about the flu, visit [CDPH's website](#). For the flu vaccine location nearest you, visit www.flu.gov.

www.cdph.ca.gov