



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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ADPH encourages influenza immunization for those 6 months of age and older

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourage vaccination of all persons 6 months of age and older against influenza as soon as the vaccine becomes available. The flu is a very contagious respiratory illness, and the CDC states the best way to prevent flu is to get vaccinated each year.

“We recommend you receive a flu vaccine regardless of whether you had one last year,” Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said. “The CDC calls a yearly flu vaccine the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease.”

Influenza vaccination is especially recommended for the following persons who are at higher risk of influenza-related complications:

- All children younger than 5 years of age, but especially children younger than 2 years
- Adults 50 years of age and older, especially those 65 years and older
- Adults and children with chronic disorders
- Pregnant women
- Children aged 6 months through 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Persons who are immunosuppressed
- Health care workers
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children less than 5 and adults 50 years of age and older
- People who are morbidly obese (those with a body mass index, or BMI, of 40 or greater)

Anyone else who wishes to reduce the chance of contracting influenza should get a flu shot. A person with the flu may have some or all of these symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and often extreme fatigue. An average of 36,000 people die from influenza each year in the United States.

The public is also reminded to follow basic infection control measures to help prevent the spread of the flu. These include covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or cloth when coughing and sneezing, staying at home when sick, and washing hands frequently.

Contact your private physician or your local county health department for a flu clinic schedule. For more information contact the Immunization Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health at (334) 206-5023 or toll free at 800-469-4599.

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