



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

www.adph.org

Prepare for the holidays by getting a flu shot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Winkler Sims
Tracey England
(334) 206-5023

The Alabama Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourage all persons 6 months of age and older to reduce their risk of illness by getting immunized against influenza. The flu is a very contagious respiratory illness, and the CDC states the best way to prevent flu is to get vaccinated each year. Adequate supplies of vaccine are available.

“As families travel around Alabama and to other parts of the United States this holiday season, it is important to be protected from influenza,” Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said. “Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself against this deadly disease. And remember to cover your coughs and sneezes to help not spread flu to others.”

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 age 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)

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. Each year in the United States an average of 36,000 people die from influenza.

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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