



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Influenza detected in Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Influenza activity has been detected in several parts of the state, including Baldwin, Cullman, Etowah, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Mobile, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa counties. The strain of influenza found in Jefferson County was the most common type seen in the remainder of the United States this year, type A (H3N2).

"Many clinics and physician offices have exhausted their supply of vaccine; however, it may not be too late to be vaccinated for influenza if you can find it available," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, "Even though it takes two weeks for the vaccine to induce immunity, it still may be worthwhile to be vaccinated this season."

Influenza has been detected later than usual in the state. Dr. J.P. Lofgren, state epidemiologist, said. "Influenza is unpredictable. In Alabama influenza can occur any time between November and March. Influenza outbreaks occur with regularity, so the take home lesson is to be immunized in October or November if possible."

Michael Likos, epidemiologist with the health department's Division of Epidemiology, said, "It is difficult to precisely monitor where influenza is occurring throughout the entire state, and so this highly contagious disease might be found in other counties."

To assess the prevalence of influenza in Alabama, 31 medical providers report the number of their patients seen with influenza-like illnesses, 176 schools throughout the state report student absences on Wednesdays, 12 larger hospitals report results of testing for influenza, and the state public health laboratory performs influenza cultures.

Your county health department may be able to advise you where influenza vaccine is available.

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