



NEWS RELEASE

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National Influenza Vaccination Week Highlights the Importance of Flu Vaccination

BISMARCK, N.D. – December 5 through 11 is National Influenza Vaccination Week. The North Dakota Department of Health is reminding all North Dakotans of the importance of receiving the flu vaccine, according to Molly Sander, Immunization Program manager for the Department of Health.

“There is more than enough flu vaccine available for anyone who wants to be vaccinated,” Sander said. “Everyone 6 months of age and older is recommended to be vaccinated, regardless of age or health status.”

Influenza vaccinations are available at physician offices, local public health units and pharmacies. Nine cases of influenza have been reported to the North Dakota Department of Health so far this season. The flu season typically does not peak in North Dakota until after the New Year, so there is still sufficient time for people to get vaccinated.

“The flu vaccine is updated each season to protect against the three flu viruses that research indicates will cause the most illness,” said Sander. “Because flu viruses are always changing, last season’s flu vaccine, including the H1N1 vaccine, may not protect against newer viruses. Getting vaccinated each year is the only way to protect yourself and your family each flu season.”

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone be vaccinated against the flu, especially the following:

- All children ages 6 months through 18 years
- All adults ages 50 and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Pregnant women
- American Indians

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- People of any age who have long-term health problems, such as:
 - Heart disease
 - Lung disease
 - Kidney disease
 - Diabetes
 - Asthma
 - Anemia
 - Weakened immune systems due to HIV/AIDS and cancer treatments
 - Breathing problems due to neuromuscular disorders

People who could spread the disease to those at high risk – such as health-care workers, out-of-home caregivers and household contacts – also should be vaccinated.

The Department of Health is airing television and radio public service announcements during National Influenza Vaccination Week to encourage everyone to be vaccinated. The PSAs are available for viewing at www.ndflu.com/News/NewsReleases.aspx.

For information about vaccine availability, people should contact their local public health unit, health-care provider or pharmacist. For information about influenza, visit www.ndflu.com.

REMEMBER: The flu vaccine can protect not only you, but everyone around you.

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