

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Getting a Flu Shot Now Can Help Protect You and Your Holiday Guests

Health officials are encouraging Wisconsin residents to include flu shots in their planning for upcoming holiday get-togethers with family and friends.

“We all want to protect our elderly relatives, the new babies joining the family tree, students home from school, and other family and friends who gather at our homes for holiday events,” said State Health Officer Karen McKeown. “Getting a flu shot is a great way to help keep yourself—and your holiday guests—healthy this flu season.”

Some 7,530 people in Wisconsin were hospitalized due to flu-related complications during the 2017-18 flu season, and 379 people died, including three children.

There are ample supplies of flu vaccine available among health care providers and pharmacies. The flu shot is safe and effective for people age 6 months and older. You can [find a location near you where the vaccine is available](#), or attend a flu shot clinic provided by employers, faith-based organizations, and community groups.

These steps can also help you protect yourself, family members, and friends:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your upper sleeve, and try to avoid touching your face with your hand. If you use a tissue, throw it away after one use.
- Use your own drinking cups and straws.
- Avoid being exposed to people who are sick.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest, and do not smoke.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, refrigerator handle, telephone, faucets).
- If you're sick, stay home, rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco.
- If you are sick, see a health care provider if your symptoms persist or get worse.

[The DHS Weekly Influenza Report](#) provides information about the current flu season. Follow @DHSWI on [Twitter \(link is external\)](#) and [Facebook \(link is external\)](#) for weekly updates from our “Flu Guy”, Influenza Surveillance Coordinator Tom Haupt.