



Press Release



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With Hospitalizations on the Rise, DHS Wants to Avoid a More Deadly Flu Season

Residents encouraged to get flu shots and take other precautions to avoid serious illness

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) today announced our state has seen 459 hospitalizations for influenza “Flu” this season, more than three times as many than at this time last year. Admissions to intensive care units for respiratory illnesses are also on the rise. And already, 11 Wisconsinites have died due to complications from influenza.

“These hospitalizations and deaths are a sober reminder that flu is not only dangerous; but it can be deadly,” said State Health Officer Jeanne Ayers. “That’s why we urge all Wisconsinites to get flu shots, not only to protect themselves, but also everyone around them from serious illness. If you have not gotten your flu shot, it is not too late.”

The flu shot can help prevent the virus, and greatly reduce symptoms if you do get it, shortening time away from work or school. Everyday habits can also help you avoid catching or spreading the flu:

- Stay home if you're sick. You can pass the flu to friends or family before you even know you have it. See a health care provider if your symptoms persist or get worse.
- If you’re visiting a loved one in a hospital, nursing home, or other assisted living facility, ask a nurse for a mask and be sure to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer. Some facilities may put restrictions on visitors. Check before you go.
- Don’t hold or kiss a baby if you’re sick. Babies under six months old cannot get the flu shot.
- 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, straws, and utensils.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest, and don’t smoke.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, refrigerator handles, telephones, faucets).

Contact the Polk County Health Department to schedule a “Flu Shot” today at 715-485-8400

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