



Jeb Bush
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary

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DOH ENCOURAGES FLORIDIANS TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO GET THEIR FLU VACCINE

-- Schedule an appointment with your primary physician now --

TALLAHASSEE – In preparation for the 2006-2007 flu season, Florida Department of Health (DOH) officials urge Floridians, especially those 50 years of age and older, to make an appointment with their primary health care provider to receive a flu vaccine. Since flu season can begin as early as October, it is best to schedule an appointment now to ensure you are vaccinated later in the year.

“The best protection against the flu is to get vaccinated every year. I strongly encourage Florida residents to call their doctor to schedule a flu shot,” said DOH Secretary M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D. “Getting vaccinated not only helps protect you from getting sick with the flu but it also helps to protect others. Flu does not peak in Florida until late February. Flu vaccine will be available now through the first of the year. Check with your physician as to when he or she suggests you come in for your flu shot.”

DOH anticipates that flu vaccine will be plentiful this season. Influenza vaccine manufacturers project that approximately 100 million doses of influenza vaccine will be available in the U.S. for use during the 2006-2007 influenza season. This amount represents approximately 16% more doses than were available for the 2005-06 season.

Health care workers are a group at high risk for acquiring and transmitting illnesses such as influenza in their workplace and should be immunized. “Protect yourself. Protect your patients. Protect your co-workers. Protect your family members. Get your flu vaccine,” advises Dr. François.

Annual influenza vaccination is now recommended for the following groups:

- Persons at high risk for influenza-related complications and severe disease, including
 - children aged 6--59 months
 - pregnant women
 - persons aged >50 years
 - persons of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- Persons who live with or care for persons at high risk, including
 - household contacts who have frequent contacts with persons at high risk and who can transmit influenza to those persons at high risk
- Health-care workers

Everyone who is 6 months or older can benefit from the protection of a flu shot. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza-related deaths average 36,000 per year, many among the elderly and very young. Influenza also results in about 200,000 hospitalizations per year. However, only 5 to 20 percent of the population gets the flu annually.



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Two types of vaccines protect against the flu. The "flu shot" is an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. A different kind of vaccine, called the nasal-spray flu vaccine (sometimes referred to as LAIV for Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine), is administered by nasal sprayer. It is approved for use only among healthy people between the ages of 5 and 49 years. The flu shot is approved for use among people over 6 months of age, including healthy people and those with chronic medical conditions. The ingredients in the vaccine *cannot* cause the flu.

Since prevention is the key to reduce the probability of contracting flu, here are practical steps to stop the spread of flu:

- Influenza vaccine can prevent influenza, so get immunized
- Clean hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleanser
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Stay home when you are sick and keep sick children home
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill, if possible
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Stay healthy: get plenty of rest, healthy foods, fluids and exercise

For information about how to schedule a flu vaccination, contact your private physician or personal health care provider. For more information on Flu and Flu vaccination, visit the DOH Web site at http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/immune/flu/index.htm or www.cdc.gov/flu.

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