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DOH-BAY OBSERVES NATIONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION WEEK

As long as the flu virus is circulating, it's not too late to get your flu shot

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Panama City, Fla.— National Influenza Vaccination Week is being observed from December 6 – 12. As long as flu viruses are circulating, it's not too late to get vaccinated. Vaccinating your family this flu season is the best way to fight the flu. It takes two weeks for the shot to become effective, it's important to get the vaccination now to make sure you are covered for the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

"Some people may think it's too late to get their flu vaccine after October or November", said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, CPH, "We want to stress that getting your flu shot later in the year still adds needed protection against the flu virus."

A yearly flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. Vaccination is especially important for protecting people at high risk of serious flu complications, including:

- Young children
- Pregnant women
- Adults 65 years and older
- Anyone with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart diseases

DOH-Bay is now offering flu vaccines for children ages 6 months to 18 years of age at no charge through the Vaccines for Children program. DOH-Bay also offers adult flu vaccines for \$36.24 and high-dose flu vaccine for \$69.77. Vaccines are available by appointment only. Call (850) 872-4455 and follow the prompts for an appointment. You can also get a flu vaccine through your provider or pharmacy.

Getting the flu shot each year is important but reducing illness and hospitalization from flu is even more critical this year to protect frontline health care workers and hospital systems who will continue to care for people with COVID-19 and other illnesses. Also, having the flu and COVID-19 at the same time could lead to a negative outcome. Like COVID-19, flu shares many of the same symptoms: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle pain or body aches and headache.

Until there is a steady vaccine supply against COVID-19, the way to help prevent these two viruses from circulating at the same time is to get your flu vaccine now. Additionally, there will be less spread of the flu and COVID-19 if everyone continues to:

- Stay home if you're sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces in your home, school or office
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly

To learn more about the flu, visit the following:

- General flu information- [cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu).
- People at high risk for complications- [cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm).

- Flu vaccine safety- [cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/vaccinesafety.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/vaccinesafety.htm).
- VaccineFinder.org- www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/index.html.

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