



Charlie Crist
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State Surgeon General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 6, 2010

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**THE ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZES
DECEMBER 5th- 11th AS NATIONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION WEEK.**

--Residents urged to protect against flu by getting vaccinated--

ST. AUGUSTINE — In observance of National Influenza Vaccination Week, the St. Johns County Health Department/Florida Department of Health is encouraging county residents to get their annual influenza vaccination if they haven't already.

Even active healthy people can get the flu, which can lead to serious complications. The disease can also be very costly in terms of lost wages and reduced productivity, time off work to care for yourself or to stay home with a sick family member. Each year, more than 200,000 people nationally are hospitalized from – or due to the flu, including an average of 20,000 children younger than 5 years of age.

“The flu vaccine is a widely available safe and effective primary step in preventing flu in our communities,” said Dawn C. Allicock, M.D., M.P.H., Director of the St. Johns County Health Department. “We encourage everyone to take the opportunity to protect themselves, their families, communities, and visitors to our area from the flu by getting vaccinated.”

Vaccination against the influenza virus is recommended for everyone age six months and older and it is especially important for healthcare providers to be vaccinated. Influenza viruses are constantly changing, and each year, the most prevalent types of viruses in global circulation are also likely to change. Further, these viruses can affect people differently based on their body's ability to fight off and recover from infection. For this reason, vaccination is recommended each year in order to confer protection against the types and strains of influenza viruses that people are most likely to encounter.

Although everyone is at risk for seasonal influenza, there are some groups at greater risk for serious complications following infection, including:

- People 65 years and older,
- Children younger than 5, but especially those less than 2 years old,
- People with certain chronic health conditions, such as asthma and COPD, diabetes, heart disease, some neurological conditions, and other specific conditions, and
- Pregnant women.

For a full list, including a listing of those who should not be vaccinated, see “People at High Risk of Developing Flu–Related Complications” at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm.

In Florida, a typical flu season can last from September into April or May, with incidence of infection occurring both before and after this timeframe and incidence peak often occurring between February and May.

Our Mission: *Promote, protect and improve the health of all people in Florida.*

Our Vision: *A healthier future for the people of Florida.*

Our Values: *- Integrity; Commitment to Service; Respect; Excellence; Accountability; Teamwork; Empowerment –*



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



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Flu vaccines are offered in many doctors' offices and clinics. Floridians without a medical home are able to get a flu vaccine at their local health department, a pharmacy, an urgent care clinic, or maybe even a school, college health center, or workplace.

The mission of DOH is to promote, protect, and improve the health of all people in Florida. For more information about influenza, the risks and benefits of the vaccine, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>, <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/NIVW/index.htm>, and <http://www.immunizeflorida.org/>.

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