



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6, 2019

PH19-034

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Flu Activity Widespread in California

There is still time to get a flu shot

SACRAMENTO – With flu reaching levels typically seen later in the season, including widespread influenza activity throughout California, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is reminding people ...now is the time to get a flu shot.

Since September 29, 2019, when the flu season started, there have been 16 influenza-coded deaths identified on death certificates. In addition, two influenza-associated deaths in children under the age of 18 have been reported to CDPH. Measures of influenza activity monitored by CDPH are showing flu season has started earlier in California than in recent years.

Getting vaccinated is the best defense against the flu. It takes a couple of weeks after vaccination for the body to build immunity, so don't delay getting a shot.

"Flu activity is starting earlier than usual in California this season," said Dr. Sonia Angell, State Public Health Officer and CDPH Director. "The flu shot protects you and those around you by making it less likely you'll get sick if you're exposed to the virus, and if you do get ill, you'll tend to have fewer days of symptoms and they'll be less severe."

Besides getting immunized, you can also take some other simple steps:

- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you or your child are sick.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with your sleeve or disposable tissue.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

CDPH recommends the annual flu vaccination for everyone six months of age and older. While anyone can get the flu, pregnant women, adults 65 years of age and older, and people with chronic conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes and asthma are [particularly at risk](#) for flu-related complications.

Children five years old and younger, especially those under two, and all children with long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and disorders of the brain or nervous system are at risk of serious complications if they get the flu. It is important that parents speak with their doctor as soon as possible if their child develops flu symptoms, particularly children with a higher risk for flu complications. Parents of any child with flu symptoms should make sure their child is well-hydrated and gets plenty of rest.

“The flu isn’t merely a winter cold: it is a serious, and very contagious virus that can be deadly. The flu is preventable, but a vaccination is needed every year to maintain the greatest protection,” said Dr. Angell.

Across the U.S. and in California, we currently have an outbreak of acute lung disease associated with vaping. The early symptoms can be similar to those associated with influenza or other respiratory conditions. If you vape or use e-cigarettes, it’s particularly important that you get your flu shot this year. If you visit your health care provider for symptoms you think might be influenza, be sure to tell your provider about your use of e-cigarettes or vaping.

For more information about the flu, visit [CDPH’s website](#). For the flu vaccine location nearest you, visit www.flu.gov.

www.cdph.ca.gov