

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH OFFICIALS URGE FLU PRECAUTIONS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

LEE COUNTY— Florida Department of Health in Lee County (DOH-Lee) officials urge residents and visitors to take precautions to limit their risk of exposure to seasonal flu, through vaccination and frequent thorough hand washing.

There is increased activity in the state, and Lee County has seen a 66 percent increase in confirmed cases of influenza. Seasonal flu is an infection of the respiratory tract caused by the influenza virus. Compared with most other viral respiratory infections, such as the common cold, influenza infection often causes a more severe illness.

“The most effective precautions we can take to fight the flu are getting vaccinated and diligently practicing good hygiene like washing hands often,” DOH-Lee Epidemiologist Jennifer Roth said. “Everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated, even if they received a vaccine last season. With the holidays in full swing and many people traveling, these simple precautions lessen your risk of exposure to the virus or transmission to others.”

Be sure to watch for symptoms of influenza, such as headache, fever, cough, body aches or extreme tiredness.

The DOH-Lee urges the following preventive steps for the flu:

- Get re-vaccinated **EVERY FLU SEASON** because strains of flu viruses change each year.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- If you have a chronic illness, or are pregnant, contact your healthcare provider when you have an illness that might be influenza. Children and adults may benefit from treatment with prescription antiviral medication. See your health care provider as soon as symptoms begin.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Wash your hands often throughout the day, whether you are sick or not, with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Chronic illnesses that put you at risk for more severe influenza and complications, no matter how old you are, include: diabetes, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cancer, and neurological and developmental disorders. People who are obese are also at increased risk of severe influenza.

Florida Department of Health

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DOH-Lee gives flu vaccine to adults and children at its main office 3920 Michigan Avenue, Fort Myers from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 1-3 p.m. on Friday. All children's vaccinations are free. Adult vaccines range from \$30-\$50.

To locate flu vaccine, contact your healthcare provider or visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/prevention-safety-and-wellness/flu-prevention/locate-a-flu-shot.html>.

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