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## RAISE YOUR SHIELD

*Defend yourself and others from flu with vaccine*

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**Fort Myers, Fla.** – Defend yourself and others from the flu by raising your best shield to repel influenza viruses—a vaccine. Influenza-like illnesses have already started to rise in Southwest Florida, and the Florida Department of Health in Lee County wants everyone who hasn't been vaccinated against the flu to do so now.

"Flu-like illnesses in Lee County historically begin their major increase in late December with the peak occurring in January and February," said Jennifer Roth, Lee's public health epidemiologist. "By getting your vaccine today, you can prevent your own illness and that of others who can't get the vaccine, like children under 6 months old and people contraindicated due to medical conditions."

Symptoms of influenza include headache, fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches or extreme tiredness. To avoid those symptoms:

- Get re-vaccinated EVERY FLU SEASON because virus strains change annually
- Flu vaccine is effective (strains in circulation match those covered in the vaccine)
- Stay home when feeling ill with flu symptoms (except to get medical care) for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or with your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- In sickness and good health, wash your hands with soap and water often, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

This is National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW). A goal of NIVW is to connect the importance of flu vaccination to people who are at high risk for developing flu-related complications: Young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions and people 65-years and older. People at low risk for developing complications can save themselves the misery of illness and help high risk individuals by getting the flu vaccine.

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

To locate flu vaccine, contact your healthcare provider, pharmacist or visit

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/flu-prevention/locate-a-flu-shot.html> .

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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