

December 15, 2017

## FLORIDA HEALTH IN INDIAN RIVER COUNTY URGES VACCINATION AS FLU SEASON INTENSIFIES



**Contact:**

Stacy Brock

772-794-7479

[Stacy.Brock@flhealth.gov](mailto:Stacy.Brock@flhealth.gov)

**Indian River County, Fla.—** With the 2017-2018 flu season in full swing and influenza (flu) activity increasing across the state, it is critical that all Floridians get the flu vaccine to protect against infection and help prevent the spread of seasonal flu to others. It is never too late to get your flu shot. While most cases of flu are mild, there are exceptions.

“By getting a flu shot and practicing good hand washing techniques, we can help prevent the spread of the flu”, said Miranda Hawker, Florida Department of Health in Indian River County Administrator. “Everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated, even if they got the flu shot last season.”

Flu activity is on the rise in Florida, particularly in groups at high risk for severe illness such as children, pregnant women, people with underlying chronic conditions and people over the age of 65. Visits to emergency departments for influenza are also increasing in these high risk groups. The department continues to urge residents to reduce their risk of severe illness from infection by getting vaccinated against influenza. This is especially important for individuals at high-risk for severe illness.

The annual flu vaccine is safe and is the most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones. The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months and older, including pregnant women. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for your body to develop protection against the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends people get injectable flu shots. Nasal spray vaccine is not recommended for this flu season because of concerns about its effectiveness.

It is also essential to practice good health and hygiene habits to help prevent the spread of seasonal flu by:

- Washing your hands with soap and water frequently, or using alcohol hand sanitizers when soap and water is not available
- Cleaning and disinfecting commonly used surfaces in your home, school or office
- Coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow
- Avoiding touching your face as germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick

- Staying home from work when sick and keeping sick children home from school to help prevent spreading the flu to others

Symptoms of the flu include:

- Body aches and pains
- Cough and chest discomfort which may become severe
- Early and significant exhaustion
- Fatigue and weakness that may last up to 2–3 weeks
- Headache
- High fever (102–104 degrees F) for 3–4 days
- Occasional stuffy nose, sneezing and sore throat

The flu vaccine is offered in many convenient locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, retail stores, pharmacies, health centers and by many employers and schools. Visit the department's flu shot locator page at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/flu-prevention/locate-a-flu-shot.html> to search for a flu vaccine location near you.

For further information regarding influenza surveillance information, messaging and guidance, visit the influenza homepage at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/floridaflu>.

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

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).