

Purpose

The purpose of this Alert is to encourage all individuals and caregivers to be vaccinated for the flu. The single best way to protect against the Flu is to get vaccinated each fall. Note: The flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May and typically peaks in January or February. Vaccinations should occur as soon as possible, ideally in October. Routine annual vaccination is recommended for all persons 6 months and older.

All DD Employees are required to be trained, annually, on identification and reporting of Major Unusual Incidents and Unusual Incidents prior to direct contact. This training includes the review of any **Health and Welfare Alerts** released since the previous calendar year's training.

For questions / comments, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.

What is Seasonal Influenza?

Seasonal influenza, also known as the flu, is a viral illness that causes fever, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion and body aches. It is usually spread from person to person by coughing and sneezing.

According to the Ohio Department of Health, most people who get the flu usually recover in one to two weeks, but the flu can be deadly. An estimated 200,000 people are hospitalized with the flu each year in the U.S. On average, it is estimated that there are more than 20,000 flu related deaths. Not all of these deaths are directly related to the flu but many are and possibly could be prevented with a flu vaccine.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccination

- Routine annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or older who do not have contraindications.
- For the 2016–17 influenza season, inactivated influenza vaccines (IIVs) will be available in both trivalent (IIV3) and quadrivalent (IIV4) formulations. Recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV) will be available in a trivalent formulation (RIV3).
- The nasal spray flu vaccine (live attenuated influenza vaccine or LAIV) *should not be used* during 2016-2017.
- Vaccine virus strains included in the 2016–17 U.S. trivalent influenza vaccines will be an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)–like virus, an A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)–like virus, and a B/Brisbane/60/2008–like virus (Victoria lineage). Quadrivalent vaccines will include an additional influenza B virus strain, a B/Phuket/3073/2013–like virus (Yamagata lineage).
- Different flu vaccines are approved for use in different groups of people. Factors that can determine a person's suitability for vaccination, or vaccination with a particular vaccine, include a person's age, health (current and past) and any allergies to flu vaccine or its components.



Seasonal Influenza Vaccination

- Flu vaccination should begin soon after vaccine becomes available, if possible by October. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating, **vaccination should continue to be offered throughout the flu season**, even in January or later.

Who should not be vaccinated?

There are some people who should not be vaccinated without first consulting a physician.

- Children younger than 6 months are too young to get a flu shot.
- People with severe, life-threatening allergies to flu vaccine or any ingredient in the vaccine. This might include gelatin, antibiotics, or other ingredients.

Who should talk to their doctor about the flu shot?

- If you have an allergy to eggs or any of the ingredients in the vaccine. Talk to your doctor about your allergy.
- If you ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a severe paralyzing illness, also called GBS). Some people with a history of GBS should not get this vaccine. Talk to your doctor about your GBS history.
- If you are not feeling well, talk to your doctor about your symptoms.

Did you know? In 2015, 765 individuals were hospitalized for pneumonia and flu related illnesses according to the Incident Tracking System.

Who should be prioritized for Flu vaccination during a vaccine shortage?

- Children aged 6 months through 4 years (59 months);
- People aged 50 years and older;
- People with chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, neurologic, hematologic, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus);
- People who are immunosuppressed (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by Human Immunodeficiency Virus);
- Women who are or will be pregnant during the influenza season and women up to two weeks after delivery;
- People who are aged 6 months through 18 years and receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who therefore might be at risk for experiencing Reye syndrome after influenza virus infection;
- **Household contacts and caregivers of people with medical conditions that put them at higher risk for severe complications from influenza;**
- People who are residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities;
- American Indians/Alaska Natives;



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- People with extreme obesity (body-mass index [BMI] is 40 or greater); Health care personnel; and
- Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 5 years and adults aged 50 years and older, with particular emphasis on vaccinating contacts of children aged younger than 6 months.

Among adults, complications, hospitalizations, and deaths due to influenza are generally most common among those 65 years old and over. However, adults 50 years old and over are a priority group for vaccination because this group may be more likely to have chronic medical conditions that put them at higher risk of influenza illness.

Inactivated Flu Shot Vaccine Side Effects

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever (low grade)
- Aches

If these problems occur, they begin soon after the shot and usually last one or two days. Most people who receive influenza vaccine have no serious problems from it. However, on rare occasions, flu vaccination can cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions, Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

More Info:

If you do not have a personal physician, local Health Departments often offer flu shots at a reasonable cost. When obtaining your annual flu vaccine, ask your physician if you qualify for the pneumonia vaccine also. Many local pharmacies also offer convenient reasonably priced flu shots and will process payment through your insurance if available.

Ohio Department of Health
<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/features/odhfeatures/seasflu/seasonalinfluenza.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

For Questions or Comments

For questions or comments regarding this alert, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit.

Contact Info

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Good health habits are also an important way to help prevent the flu.

It is important for staff to model these behaviors and to teach, encourage and assist with these practices routinely.

1. **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
2. **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
3. **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cough or sneeze into your sleeve to avoid spreading viruses by your hands and in the air.
4. **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

If you get the flu, antiviral drugs are a treatment option. Check with your doctor promptly if you have a high risk condition and you get flu symptoms. Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Your doctor may prescribe drugs to treat your flu illness.