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## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REMINDS FLORIDIANS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THE FLU

*The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine.*



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**St. Lucie County, FL** — The Florida Department of Health in St Lucie County is reminding all Floridians to get their flu shot before the height of the upcoming flu season. Flu activity can begin as early as October and last as late as May. The best way to avoid the flu this season, is by getting a flu shot soon.

“It’s not too late to get the flu shot. Getting a flu vaccination every year is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from influenza. If you are sick, stay home, practice good hygiene and cover your cough to help prevent the spread of flu,” said Clint Sperber, Health Officer for the Department of Health in St. Lucie County.

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 flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months and older, including pregnant women. It can take up to two weeks after vaccination to develop protection against the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting a flu vaccine every year as the first and most important step in protecting against influenza and its potentially serious complications. There are many different flu vaccine options this season, which include high dose and adjuvanted vaccine for adults aged 65 years and older.

CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine every year because flu viruses evolve quickly, and last year’s vaccine may not protect against the current year’s flu strain. Even if the flu vaccine does not fully protect against the flu, it may reduce the severity of symptoms and the risk of complications.

Getting vaccinated if you are healthy helps to protect our most vulnerable populations. People at higher risk for flu-related complications include children less than 5, adults over the age of 65, people with compromised immune systems, pregnant women and people who have existing medical conditions, such as asthma and obesity.

Visit [FluFreeFlorida.com](http://FluFreeFlorida.com) for more information on how to be a part of #FluFreeFL. For more information on influenza and influenza-like illness in Florida, please visit [www.floridahealth.gov/floridaflu](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.

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