

For Immediate Release

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Tis the Season for Preventing Flu

Get vaccinated and practice good handwashing all season long

YPSILANTI, Mich., Nov 19, 2019 – Washtenaw County Health Department encourages everyone six months and older to get vaccinated against flu (influenza) before the holiday season. Sporadic cases of flu are being reported in Washtenaw County, and rates of illness typically increase during or after the December holidays. Good handwashing, covering your cough, and staying away from others when sick also prevent the spread of flu and other contagious diseases.

“We don’t know how severe the flu season will be,” says Juan Luiz Marquez, MD, MPH, medical director at Washtenaw County Health Department. “But we know getting your flu shot and practicing good handwashing helps protect you and our entire community.”

Vaccination can protect against severe cases of illness, hospitalization, and death due to flu, as well as reduce the spread of illness. Getting vaccinated also protects the people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain chronic health conditions.

Aside from vaccination, it is also important to stay home if you are sick, cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough, wash your hands often using soap and warm water, and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.

See washtenaw.org/flu for ongoing information and surveillance on this year’s flu season.

Where to Get Vaccinated

Flu vaccine is widely available at area medical offices, pharmacies and community events. Most people with insurance can get flu shots at their doctors’ offices or pharmacies for free. See vaccinefinder.org for local options and call before visiting.

The Washtenaw County Health Department offers vaccines to children and adults regardless of insurance status or income. Cost for the flu shot is \$41 or \$79 for the high dose vaccine. Medicaid and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan accepted. Nobody will be turned away because of an inability to pay. Please call 734-544-6700 to schedule an appointment. More information is available at washtenaw.org/flushots.

Last Year’s Flu Season

Over 200 Washtenaw County residents experienced flu-related hospitalizations in the 2018-2019 season. A majority of those hospitalized were over 65 years old, although H1N1 circulated in early 2019 leading to more hospitalizations among younger adults. Almost all adults hospitalized with flu-related illness had an underlying health condition, including obesity.

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Seven percent of hospitalizations were children and teens, 17 years old or younger. Among hospitalized children, 73% had an underlying health condition, and only 40% were vaccinated against flu. Nine flu-related deaths were reported in adults, ages 24 to 87 years. There was one flu-related death in a Washtenaw County child.

Nationally, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last year was a moderately severe season. There were two waves or peaks of illness, which extended the season into May 2019. Hospitalization rates were lower among adults than the season prior, but about the same for children.

About Flu

Symptoms of the flu include: coughing, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, sore throat, headache, fatigue, fever and/or chills. The flu can affect anyone, but older adults, children and individuals with chronic health conditions are at greater risk for severe complications from flu. Flu is a contagious illness that can be spread person to person through droplets when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks.

For handwashing flyers, signage or mirror clings, [contact us](#) or [download free, printable versions](#).

Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.



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