

For Immediate Release

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It's Time for Your Flu Shot

Flu vaccines especially important during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

YPSILANTI, Mich., Oct. 21, 2021 – Now is the time for everyone six months and older to get vaccinated against flu (influenza). Flu vaccines protect against serious illness and are especially important during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting the flu vaccine before the end of October.

We are seeing sporadic flu cases in Washtenaw County, indicating that transmission is already at higher levels than last year. Local flu activity typically increases during or after the December holidays.

“Last year, COVID-19 prevention measures like masking, staying home, and handwashing helped us have unusually low flu activity,” says Juan Luis Marquez, MD, MPH, medical director at the Washtenaw County Health Department. “We don’t know how severe this flu season will be, but we know that as more people resume ‘normal’ activities and gatherings, it is easier for flu and other illnesses to spread. Getting your flu shot can help you avoid serious illness and keep the people around you safer.”

Vaccination can protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to flu, as well as reduce the overall spread of illness. Getting vaccinated can protect 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.

“As we’re heading into flu season, we continue to see [high levels](#) of COVID-19 in our community. Widespread flu and COVID-19 vaccinations and continued use of masks in public spaces, handwashing, distancing, and staying away from others when sick helps us prevent serious illness, hospitalizations, and related deaths,” continues Dr. Marquez.

Many of the same tools we use to prevent the spread of COVID-19 also help prevent the spread of flu. In addition to getting vaccinated, it is 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.

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Where to Get Vaccinated

Flu vaccine is widely available at area health care providers, pharmacies, and community events. See vaccinefinder.org for local options. Most people with insurance can get flu shots at their doctors' offices or pharmacies without any additional cost.

The Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) has a limited amount of flu vaccine for children and adults regardless of insurance status or income. WCHD will not decline services to clients if they are unable to pay. Call 734-544-6700 to schedule an appointment. Capacity and appointments will be limited due to ongoing COVID-19 vaccination and response efforts.

About Flu and COVID-19

Symptoms of the flu include coughing, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, sore throat, headache, fatigue, fever and/or chills. Flu and COVID-19 have similar symptoms. If you feel sick, get tested for COVID-19 or visit a health care provider and avoid being around others.

See more:

<https://www.washtenaw.org/3104/What-to-do-if-Youre-Sick-or-Exposed>

Flu is a contagious illness that can be spread person to person through droplets when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or talks. The flu can affect anyone, but older adults, children, and individuals with chronic health conditions are at greater risk for severe complications from flu – it is especially important that these individuals get vaccinated against the flu.

COVID-19 vs Flu		
	COVID-19	Flu
Fever/chills	✓	✓
Cough	✓	✓
Body Aches/Headache	✓	✓
Tiredness	✓	✓
Loss of taste/smell	✓	✗
Runny/stuffy nose	✓	⊖
Sore throat	⊖	⊖
Shortness of breath	✓	⊖
Severity	Varies. Older adults and people with certain underlying conditions are at higher risk of severe illness. Seems to cause more severe illness in more people than flu.	Varies. Young children, older adults, and people with certain chronic conditions are at higher risk of severe illness.
Onset of symptoms	Later (2-14 days after infection)	Earlier (1-4 days after infection)
Cause	SARS-CoV-2	Influenza viruses

  Common  Less Common  Not Common cdc.gov/coronavirus

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Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time.

Resources

- [Handwashing flyers, signage, and mirror clings](#)
- WCHD – [Flu in Washtenaw County webpage](#)
- WCHD – [Flu Vaccine webpage](#)
- CDC – [Similarities and Differences Between Flu and COVID-19](#)
- CDC – [Frequently Asked Influenza \(Flu\) Questions: 2021-2022 Season](#)

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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