



COMMUNITY HEALTH  
& THE ENVIRONMENT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## VACCINATION, PREVENTION CAN MINIMIZE SPREAD OF INFLUENZA IN OUR COMMUNITY

*St. Charles County, Missouri* – Fever, cough, stuffy nose, sore throat, headache, vomiting and body aches are just a few of the symptoms you could experience by getting influenza this season. To help safeguard the community against the illness, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment offers flu vaccines for \$25 to adults and children.

“A flu vaccine is the best way to protect you and your family against influenza,” *Hope Woodson*, the Department’s acting director, said. “Although other diseases have been at the forefront of public conversation over the last few months, it is still much more likely that you could become sick with the flu than these rare illnesses. Annual vaccinations and other prevention activities will go far toward minimizing the spread of the flu in our area.”

Influenza illnesses can range from a mild nuisance to a severe, life-threatening situation. Having symptoms similar to those of the “common cold,” the flu can lead to more serious illnesses like pneumonia and bronchitis that may require hospitalization. In addition, some people (especially those 65 years and older, pregnant women, children five and under, or those with chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, immune disorders or heart disease) are at risk for developing life-threatening complications if they become sick with the flu.

Even though flu season is underway in the Midwest and a few cases are being reported, it is not too late to receive the benefits of obtaining a vaccination — as inoculation can help protect against the virus strains predicted to be the most commonly circulating this year. Since flu activity often peaks in December, January and February, it is important to obtain your vaccination now to accommodate the two weeks before preventative antibodies develop their full immunity.

While the best way to prevent the spread of this common illness is to get the annual flu vaccine (which comes in two forms — a traditional “shot” or a nasal spray), there are other steps you and your family can take to minimize the spread of the influenza virus. Along with the vaccine, simple preventative actions such as regularly washing hands with hot, soapy water, covering your nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing, and throwing away soiled tissues will help. In addition, affected individuals should limit close contact with others and stay home until at least 24 hours after a fever subsides.

For more information on obtaining a flu shot, please call the Division of Public Health’s Immunization Clinic at (636) 949-1857 or visit <http://www.sccmo.org/593/Flu>.

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