



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Doug Bolnick, Public Information Officer, 636-949-7408

PROTECT YOURSELF, OTHERS WITH SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION

St. Charles County's Immunization Clinic Offers Flu Shots for Children and Adults

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Last season, St. Charles County recorded its busiest flu activity in recent memory, with more than 4,050 cases reported to the Department of Public Health from October 2016 through May 2017. To safeguard residents against this contagious respiratory illness, an influenza vaccination is recommended for all adults and children, six months of age and older.

“Annual vaccination and other prevention activities deliver the best protection against the flu,” said Sara Evers, Division of Health Services Director. “For most who become sick, the flu causes symptoms such as fever, cough, stuffy nose, sore throat, headache and general fatigue, but for others — especially young children and those 65 or older — the illness can be life-threatening. Those who can get vaccinated will protect themselves against the spread of the virus and, through herd immunity benefits, will reduce the risk of illness in those individuals who are unable to receive the shot because of health or other restrictions.”

Flu vaccines have a long track record for safety and effectiveness. And, although the number of those who were diagnosed with the flu was extremely high last season, several studies indicate that vaccinations reduce the risk for serious flu complications by more than 50 percent. It takes approximately two weeks for vaccine antibodies to develop, so a shot received this month will offer protection before the onset of the “season,” which typically runs from November through March.

Types of Flu Vaccinations Available

To improve effectiveness, scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice analyze and match circulating influenza viruses to formulate the composition of the vaccine. For the 2017-2018 season, this analysis determined:

- That the quadrivalent vaccine be designed to protect against four different flu viruses (an H1N1 virus, an H3N2 virus, and two influenza B viruses) and be appropriate for all individuals ages six months or older.
- That a pediatric influenza vaccine be offered with a smaller dosage of the quadrivalent vaccine, so that it is appropriate for children ages six months to 35 months.
- That a “high-dose” vaccine be made available for those 65 years of age or older. This type of vaccine contains four times the amount of antigen in a regular flu shot to boost the body’s ability to create antibodies against influenza virus.
- That the nasal spray method has not been as effective in protecting individuals against influenza as the traditional shot method. As a result, the nasal spray will not be offered by the Department of Public Health’s Immunization Clinic again this year.

(MORE)

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St. Charles County Immunization Clinic

Experienced nurses provide influenza shots and other vaccinations through the Division of Health Services' Immunization Clinic, located at 1650 Boones Lick Road in St. Charles. The Clinic operates from 8:30 to 11 a.m. and 1:30 to 4 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Patients must schedule an appointment for their visit by calling 636-949-1857.

Flu shots through the Immunization Clinic are \$35 for the quadrivalent vaccine, \$40 for the pediatric vaccine and \$55 for the “high-dose” vaccine. These costs are waived for children participating in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program or those eligible for the Adult 317 program. For more information about the vaccines or the VFC and 317 programs, please visit www.sccmo.org/immunizations.

Additional Precautions

While the best way to prevent the spread of influenza is the flu shot, there are other steps you and your family should take to improve health:

- Regularly wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds to scrub away germs.
- Cover your mouth during sneezes or coughs and throw away soiled tissues to minimize opportunities for germs to spread.
- Maintain exercise routines and get adequate rest to allow the body time to recover.

Additionally, those who do become sick should limit close contact with others. Those with symptoms should stay home until at least 24 hours after a fever subsides and treat the illness with antiviral medication prescribed by a medical professional.

Community Reporting

Preventing the flu is a community-wide effort. Along with individuals taking steps to prevent the spread, medical providers report incidences of positive cases each week to the health department to help track the illness in our community. The Division of Health Services compiles this information and issues a weekly report on the number of diagnosed cases. This report is available for viewing online at <http://www.sccmo.org/flu> or on social media through the [Department of Public Health's Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

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About the St. Charles County Department of Public Health

Through the efforts of its three divisions — Environmental Health and Protection, Health Services and Humane Services — the St. Charles County Department of Public Health provides a wide range of services that enhance the well-being of the community. To learn how the department assists this region or to find out about volunteer opportunities with any of the divisions, visit www.sccmo.org/PublicHealth or call 636-949-7400.

The mission of St. Charles County's Division of Health Services is to promote healthy choices and improve the health of the community. To achieve these goals, program services include Immunizations, WIC Program, STD Prevention, Treatment and Counseling, Communicable Disease investigation, educational programming, the collection and distribution of birth and death certificates, assistance in applications for U.S. passports, and much more. For information on programs offered and to discover ways the division assists the community, visit <http://www.sccmo.org/HealthServices> or call 636-949-7400.