



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health Department Encourages Pennsylvanians to Receive Flu Vaccine, Practice Healthy Habits as Flu Season Begins

Harrisburg, PA – At an event at the Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center today, the Department of Health reminded residents that it is time to get their flu vaccine, as flu season officially starts this month and runs until May. Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine encouraged residents to get their flu vaccine before the end of October and offered important tips to stay healthy during flu season.

“The flu is serious and can be deadly, which is why it is so important for everyone to take the proper precautions to protect themselves, their loved ones and anyone they meet,” said Dr. Levine. “Last year, we had more than 122,000 cases statewide and 258 deaths. It is imperative that you get your flu vaccine now so you can be protected throughout the flu season. There is no better measure to protect yourself than to get a flu vaccine.”

Dr. Levine noted the flu vaccine can often diminish the severity of symptoms a person might experience should they come down with the flu. Flu vaccines are available at your doctor’s office, pharmacy, local walk-in clinic or grocery store. In addition to the flu shot, the flu nasal spray is also available this year, and both are recommended to protect yourself against the flu.

Influenza is a contagious disease, caused by the influenza virus. It attacks the nose, throat and lungs and may include the following symptoms:

- Fever;
- Headache;
- Tiredness;
- Dry cough;
- Sore throat;
- Nasal congestion; and
- Body aches.

The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Everyone 6 months and older should get the flu vaccine each season. It takes about two weeks for the antibodies from the vaccine to develop protection against infection.

In addition to getting vaccinated, Pennsylvanians are encouraged to practice healthy habits like covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, frequently

washing your hands during flu season and remembering to disinfect commonly-touched objects, such as door knobs, light switches, countertops, cell phones and computers.

If you do become sick with the flu, it is important to stay home and rest. If you are at risk for developing serious complications from the flu, or feel extremely ill, you should see a medical professional immediately.

Additional information on how to stay healthy and prevent the flu can be found on the Department of Health's [website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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