

Flu 2021-2022: It's time to roll up our sleeves, Louisiana!

September 2021 - Key Messages

Getting a flu shot is easy, fast and low-cost.

- Flu season is starting in Louisiana. It's time to get the flu shot to reduce your chances of getting and spreading the flu. You can also help care for a loved one who may be at high risk of contracting the flu by helping make sure they get their flu shot, too.
- A yearly flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Getting a vaccine this flu season will be more important than ever.
- Flu vaccines will not prevent COVID-19, but they will reduce the burden of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths. Currently, there is no combined flu/COVID-19 shot. Getting both the flu and COVID-19 vaccines, one right after the other, can greatly impact your health and ability to recover.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get the flu shot by the end of October. That's because it can take some time for your body to recognize and respond to the vaccine.
- Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school because of flu, as well as prevent serious flu complications that can result in hospitalization and even death.
- Getting a flu shot has never been easier. You can get your flu shot at your local pharmacy or doctor's office. Starting in a few weeks, the Office of Public Health will hold its annual flu vaccination clinics across the state. These will be no cost.
- The flu vaccine not only protects you, but it also can help protect those around you.
- Flu vaccination is especially important for people who are at high risk of developing serious complications from flu, including children younger than 5, pregnant women, adults 65 and older, and people with certain chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and asthma.
- The good news is that the everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of the flu are the same as those that we've been asking you to take to stop the spread of COVID-19.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - If you are sick, stay home and limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with viruses that cause the flu.

Flu Facts

Flu Incidence

- Most seasonal flu activity occurs between October and May, and typically peaks between December and February.
- With holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas quickly approaching, now is the time to get your flu shot. People tend to spend more time indoors during the winter holidays, which makes it much easier to spread the flu.

Flu Impact

- The flu was associated with an estimated 14,000 hospitalizations and 1,000 deaths in Louisiana last year.
- Influenza is especially serious in long-term care facilities (nursing homes). Severe and even fatal illness can be introduced by healthcare workers, visitors, and newly admitted residents.
- The flu has a tremendous impact on school attendance and on the families of school children. An estimated 28% of school-aged children get influenza each year.

For Further Information

- Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm> for weekly FluView updates from the CDC.
- For Louisiana-specific information, visit the LDH “Fight the Flu LA” webpage (<https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/subhome/8>) for great information and resources and to see weekly flu activity reports and much more.