



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
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Statewide News Release

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Early Influenza Cases Reported
Two laboratory cases confirmed

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sep. 15, 2017) – The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, reports two cases of laboratory-confirmed influenza, indicating the presence of flu activity in Kentucky. The cases are both from Jefferson County.

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends flu vaccine for all individuals aged six months of age and older. People who are strongly encouraged to receive the flu vaccine because they may be at higher risk for complications or negative consequences include:

- Children age six months through 59 months;
- Women who are or will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- Persons 50 years of age or older;
- Persons with extreme obesity (Body Mass Index of 40 or greater);
- Persons aged six months and older with chronic health problems;
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities;
- Household contacts (including children) and caregivers of children aged ≤59 months (i.e., aged <five years, particularly contacts of children aged <six months) and adults aged ≥50 years;
- Household contacts and caregivers or people who live with a person at high-risk for complications from the flu; and
- Health care workers, including physicians, nurses, and other workers in inpatient and outpatient-care settings, medical emergency-response workers (e.g., paramedics and emergency medical technicians), employees of nursing home and long-term care facilities who have contact with patients or residents, and students in these professions who will have contact with patients.

Adequate supplies of flu vaccine are expected to be available for this year's flu season. Only injectable influenza vaccine formulations will be distributed in the United States. Vaccination can be given any time during the flu season.

"Getting the flu can be debilitating and sometimes life-threatening. Vaccination is the best tool we have to prevent the flu," said Hiram C. Polk, Jr., M.D., commissioner of DPH. "It's also extremely important to take simple preventive steps to avoid the flu. You should also follow the advice your parents gave you to prevent

flu and other illnesses that tend to circulate at this time of year – wash your hands frequently, cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and stay home when you're sick.”

Beginning in October, DPH officials will begin to report weekly influenza activity to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of statewide flu surveillance efforts.

Infection with the flu virus can cause fever, headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing and body aches. Flu can be very contagious. For more information on influenza or the availability of flu vaccine, Kentuckians should contact their primary care medical provider or local health department. Influenza information is also available online at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.