



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

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### **Widespread Flu Activity Reported for 10th Consecutive Week**

*It's Not Too Late to Vaccinate Against Flu*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Mar. 8, 2019) – The Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), reports flu activity in Kentucky is at “widespread” for the 10th consecutive week. Widespread is the highest level of flu activity, indicating increased flu-like activity or flu outbreaks in at least half of the state’s regions.

“With the traditional flu season running from October through May, it is not too late for Kentuckians to protect themselves and their families from the flu by getting a flu shot,” said Dr. Jeff Howard, DPH Commissioner. “We are urging anyone who hasn’t received a flu vaccine, particularly children 6 months and older and those people at high risk for complications related to the flu, to check with doctors’ offices, local health departments, pharmacies or other providers about getting the vaccine.”

Kentucky is currently reporting 44 flu-related deaths for the 2018-19 flu season. For the 2017-18 flu season, Kentucky reported a total of 333 flu-related deaths.

It takes about two weeks after the getting the shot for a person to develop protection from the flu. Flu can be very contagious. Infection with the flu virus can cause fever, headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing and body aches. Persons who develop flu symptoms should seek medical advice about the need for a medical evaluation or treatment which could shorten the course of the illness or reduce its severity.

Activity levels are tracked weekly as part of the national flu surveillance system at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Weekly flu activity reports for Kentucky are posted on the Cabinet's website each Friday by noon. Go to [www.chfs.ky.gov](http://www.chfs.ky.gov) and type "flu" in the "What can we help you find/" toolbar.

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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, the Department for Aging and Independent Living 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.*