



**Commonwealth of Kentucky
Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Observe National Influenza Vaccination Week by
Getting a Flu Shot**

Help prevent spread of flu, Dec. 5-11, 2021

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 10, 2021) – Kentuckians are encouraged to get a flu vaccination during National Influenza Vaccination Week, Dec. 5-11, to prevent the spread of flu this holiday season.

"The flu vaccine is the single best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu," said Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH). "If you are vaccinated, you are less likely to get the flu and spread the flu to those at greatest risk for becoming dangerously ill, including young children, pregnant women, people 65 and older and those with underlying medical conditions. With COVID-19 cases escalating and the added threat of circulating flu viruses, it is imperative that every Kentuckian take the essential steps to protect themselves, their loved ones and their communities."

KDPH officials report weekly to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of statewide flu surveillance efforts. Kentucky currently is reporting 36 laboratory-confirmed cases of flu with the state flu activity level currently classified as "[Local](#)." The [weekly report is now available online](#) and is updated each Friday.

Flu is a serious upper respiratory illness that can lead to prolonged illness and absenteeism from school or work; inpatient and outpatient medical care including visits to the emergency room or hospitalizations; and, in severe cases, death.

National Influenza Vaccination Week is a weeklong observance that serves as a reminder to those people who have not yet received a flu vaccine that the time to get vaccinated continues into winter – through February or later – when flu season typically peaks. Because it takes about two weeks for the body to develop protective antibodies against the flu following vaccination, Kentuckians who have not had a chance to be vaccinated should seek out the opportunity now. Vaccine supplies are considered plentiful at this time, but people are urged to call their providers or pharmacies to check on availability.

Throughout the week, the CDC and KDPH will highlight the importance of vaccinations for those people at high risk, their close contacts and all those who want to be protected against the flu. In addition, good health habits such as washing hands often with soap and warm water, avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth, and staying at home from work or school when sick will also be emphasized.

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends a flu vaccine for all individuals 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 between 6 months and 5 years old;
- 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 6 months old and older who have chronic health problems;
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities;
- Household contacts (including children) and caregivers of children under 5 years old and adults 50 years of age and older;
- 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 homes 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 season. Vaccination can be given any time during the flu season and can be given at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine or booster shot.

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 medical care professional, local health department or local pharmacy. 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 health care 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.