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## Health officials encourage pregnant women to receive flu vaccination

SARASOTA COUNTY — The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) urges pregnant women to receive the flu vaccination due to the increased impact that influenza infections are having on pregnant women and their babies in Florida this year.

“The flu vaccine is the single best way to prevent flu,” said DOH-Sarasota Medical Director Dr. William Heymann. “We want to make sure people understand how important it is for pregnant women to receive the influenza vaccination to protect themselves and their babies.”

DOH-Sarasota recommends that all individuals six months of age and older receive the flu vaccination each year. It is especially important for pregnant women to be vaccinated due to the increased risk of complications associated with contracting the flu while pregnant. The flu vaccination is safe and will protect the mother, the unborn child, and will also help protect babies during the first months after birth.

Additional flu prevention steps include washing your hands often, keeping your hands away from your face and covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing and coughing. Symptoms of the flu include headache, fever, severe cough, runny nose or body aches. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, see your primary care provider immediately for guidance on treatment. For more information on pregnant women and influenza, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/pregnant.htm>

It is important for you and your family members to get a flu vaccine every year. Flu vaccines are offered in many locations, including doctor’s offices, clinics, health departments, retail stores, pharmacies, health centers, and by many employers and schools. Check with your physician, the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County or visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/prevention-safety-and-wellness/flu-prevention/locate-a-flu-shot.html> to search for a location to receive a flu vaccine.

DOH protects, promotes and improves the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. For more information about the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County, please visit [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org) or call 941-861-2900.

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### ***MEDIA NOTES:***

#### **DOH-Sarasota Media Contact:**

Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058; [Dianne.Shipley@flhealth.gov](mailto:Dianne.Shipley@flhealth.gov)

#### **SARASOTA COUNTY MEDIA RELATIONS**

##### **CURT PREISSER**

desk 941-861-5884

cell 941-650-2883

[cpreisse@scgov.net](mailto:cpreisse@scgov.net)

##### **JAMIE CARSON**

desk 941-861-5451

cell 804-873-3202

[jcarson@scgov.net](mailto:jcarson@scgov.net)

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