

Dec. 5, 2013

Communities join together with flu vaccination reminder

SARASOTA COUNTY — The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) will join health departments across the nation in recognizing National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) Dec. 8-14. The effort is a way to promote flu vaccination for all people over six months of age before the traditional winter peak in flu activity in late January and February.

Don't let the flu spoil your holiday plans. With the holiday season approaching, health officials expect to see a surge in flu-related illnesses in communities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the flu vaccine is the best defense against the seasonal flu and has a very good safety record.

Getting vaccinated not only protects you from the flu, but it can also prevent you from spreading it to friends and family as well.

Unlike the common cold, respiratory flu can cause severe illness and life-threatening complications, even in healthy younger people and pregnant women. In rare instances, death occurs.

Health officials say that you should be vaccinated each flu season because the immune protection declines over time.

“It is especially important for parents, grandparents, older siblings, caregivers, pregnant women and health care providers who live with or spend time around infants less than six months of age who are too young to get vaccinated,” says DOH-Sarasota Immunization Program Manager, Donna Keith. “This provides a “cocooning” effect protecting these vulnerable infants by preventing those around them from becoming ill.”

The protection begins about two weeks after getting vaccinated and continues throughout the flu season.



**HAVE YOU GOTTEN
YOUR FLU VACCINE?**
GET VACCINATED NOW!
IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

National Influenza
Vaccination Week
December 8 - 14, 2013

www.cdc.gov/flu



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SARASOTA COUNTY MEDIA RELATIONS

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Flu shots are still readily available in the community. Healthy individuals between ages 2-49 have the option of getting the no-shot nasal mist version of the seasonal flu vaccine. Many other flu vaccine options exist. Parents are reminded that children younger than 9 years of age who have not previously been vaccinated against the flu will need two doses of the flu vaccine, given a month apart, for full protection.

Parents who lack health insurance can bring their children from six months through age 18 to the DOH-Sarasota for free flu vaccinations through the federally funded Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. No appointment is needed for children's immunizations. However, a parent or guardian must be present, and must bring prior immunization records.

VFC-eligible children may receive flu shots as well as immunizations required for day care and school entry at the DOH-Sarasota's clinics in Sarasota and North Port as follows:

North Port Health Center

6950 Outreach Way

Check website or call for hours: 941-861-3864

Closed weekends

Adults and children six months of age and older

William L. Little Health & Human Services Center

2200 Ringling Blvd, Sarasota

Check website or call for hours: 941-861-2900

Closed weekends

Adults and children six months of age and older

Call the DOH-Sarasota flu information line at 941-861-2800 or visit www.sarasotahealth.org for a list of flu shot locations and their associated cost. This information is also available on touch-screen health kiosks at the William L. Little Health & Human Services Center, Senior Friendship Centers and all local libraries. Those who are hearing-impaired can call the Sarasota County Call Center, TTY number: 7-1-1 or 1-800-955-8771. For additional information, visit: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/prevention-safety-and-wellness/flu-prevention/index.html>.

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