



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Time Again For A Flu Shot

### *Nasal spray influenza vaccine not recommended this season*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is urging everyone six months and older to get a flu shot, not the influenza vaccine nasal spray, as soon as it's available in your community. Due to concerns about how well the nasal spray vaccine has worked during the previous flu season, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is temporarily recommending that people stick to getting a flu shot and skip the nasal spray.

“No one likes getting stuck with a needle, but no one likes having a fever, cough, sore throat, and body aches for days, or even weeks,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah. “Anyone can get the flu, even healthy people. Getting a flu shot is the first and most important step in protecting you and those around you against flu viruses.”

Influenza is spread mainly when people with the flu cough or sneeze. The flu can cause mild to severe illness, and can even result in hospitalizations or death. People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease, and people 65 years and older.

Vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, missed work and school, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. Over a period of 31 seasons between 1976 and 2007, estimates of flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people. During recent flu seasons, between 80 and 90 percent of flu related deaths have occurred in people 65 years and older.

The flu season typically runs from October to May with the peak between December and February. Last year the flu season started and peaked later than usual. It's not possible to predict what this flu season will be like. While flu spreads every year, the timing, severity, and length of the season varies from one year to another.

Manufacturers project providing between 157 million and 168 million doses of vaccine this year, the same amount as last year. While the flu shot vaccine effectiveness was almost 60 percent last year, the vaccine has been updated to better match viruses circulating this season.

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In addition to getting a flu shot, IDPH recommends following the 3 C's: clean, cover, and contain.

- **Clean** – frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- **Cover** – cover your cough and sneeze.
- **Contain** – contain your germs by staying home if you are sick.

Influenza antiviral drugs can be a second line of defense for treatment of some who get sick with the flu. Many observational studies have found that in addition to lessening the duration and severity of symptoms, antiviral drugs can prevent flu complications. Because it is important to start antiviral medication quickly, high-risk patients should contact a health care professional at the first signs of influenza symptoms, which include sudden onset of fever, aches, chills, and tiredness.

To find a location to get a flu shot in your community, check with your local health department or log onto the IDPH website to use the [Flu Vaccine Finder](#)

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