



## Jackson County Department of Public Health

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### HELP PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season is here. That means more time to spend with family and friends. However, it also can mean the spread of flu and its potentially serious outcomes, especially among certain higher risk groups, such as pregnant people and children. Getting a flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk from flu. Here are five things you should know about flu vaccination.

#### **Flu shots benefit you, your family and your community**

The most important action to protect yourself against flu is getting a flu vaccine each year. CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine to reduce your risk of getting flu and lessen its symptoms if you do get sick. Getting vaccinated against flu can also help protect loved ones, like adults 65 years and older and people living with chronic conditions, both groups of people who are at higher risk of having serious flu complications. Bottom line? Getting an annual flu vaccine is important to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community against flu.

#### **Flu shots benefit pregnant people and babies**

Flu can be especially serious for pregnant people because of changes in the immune system, heart, and lungs during pregnancy that can make them more vulnerable to flu and its potentially severe complications. The good news? Getting a flu vaccine can reduce your risk of getting flu and lessen flu symptoms if you do get sick both during and after pregnancy. A flu shot during pregnancy also can help protect your baby from flu for several months after birth, when they're too young to be vaccinated themselves.

Flu vaccines have safely protected millions of pregnant people and their babies from flu for decades. One study showed fewer cases of infants with flu in mothers who got a flu vaccine compared to mothers who were not vaccinated. This is because, when vaccinated while pregnant, you pass antibodies on to your developing baby.

#### **Flu shots benefit young children**

Did you know flu can be more serious for children than a cold? That's why it's also important to get your children vaccinated against flu this year. Children younger than 5 years old – especially those younger than 2 – and children of any age with certain chronic health conditions, like asthma and diabetes, are at a higher risk of developing potentially serious flu complications. Because these groups of children are at higher risk, it is especially important they get a flu vaccine to reduce their risk of getting sick or being hospitalized or dying from flu if they do get sick.



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### **Flu vaccines are safe and effective – and there’s still time to get vaccinated.**

Every year, experts update flu vaccines as needed to best protect against the viruses expected to spread during the upcoming season. During seasons when the vaccine viruses are well-matched to the viruses that are spreading, flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness by 40 to 60 percent. And if someone who is vaccinated gets sick, vaccination has been shown to reduce severity of illness, reducing the risk of serious flu outcomes.

The best time to get vaccinated is before flu has begun spreading widely in your community but vaccination can still be protective later. Flu most commonly peaks in February, and significant flu activity can continue into May.

You have options on which flu vaccine to get and where to get it, including at a health care provider’s office, at work, a pharmacy, some stores, or even supermarkets. Speak with a health care provider today about getting a flu vaccine to protect yourself and your loved ones.

The Jackson County Department of Public Health is offering flu vaccines for everyone 6 months and older. Call 828-586-8994 to schedule an appointment.

Learn more about the benefits of getting vaccinated against flu at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinations.htm>.

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