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## HOW TO CELEBRATE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON WITHOUT A SNEEZIN'

*Keep Vaccine Between You and the Flu*



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**Ft. Walton Beach, Fla.** — In observance of National Influenza Vaccination Week, December 6-12, the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) wants residents and visitors to know that it's not too late to receive the flu vaccine. The flu vaccine is the best defense available to protect against this potentially serious disease. In the United States, flu activity is usually highest between December and February and can last as late as May<sup>1</sup>.

"Data from previous years show that flu vaccination activity typically drops quickly after the end of November," stated Dr. Karen A. Chapman, Director of DOH-Okaloosa. "National Influenza Vaccination Week is a call to action for those who have not yet received their annual flu shot. Once vaccinated, you can enjoy this holiday season knowing that you have taken the single best step to protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu."

Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, missed work due to flu, and prevent flu-related hospitalizations. Even if you have already gotten sick with one flu virus, you can still benefit from vaccination since the flu vaccine protects against three or four different flu viruses.

People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease, and people aged 65 years and older. For people that are at high risk, getting the flu can mean developing serious flu-related complications, like pneumonia, or a worsening of existing health conditions.

To locate flu vaccine, contact your healthcare provider or local pharmacy. For more information on flu prevention, visit [www.HealthyOkaloosa.com](http://www.HealthyOkaloosa.com).

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> CDC. (2015). National Influenza Vaccination Week. Retrieved from Influenza (Flu): <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/nivw/index.htm>