

October 16, 2015

FACE THE FEAR! GET YOUR FLU SHOT BEFORE HALLOWEEN



Contact: Ryan Mims
HealthyOkaloosaPIO@flhealth.gov
(850) 833-9240 ext. 2162
Cell: (850) 420-2198

Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. — As the peak of flu season approaches, the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) urges the public to get their annual flu shot before Halloween. Receiving a flu shot can help protect individuals from the influenza (flu) virus that often can lead to a severe illness.

“The most effective precautions we can take to fight the flu are getting vaccinated and practicing good hygiene habits like washing hands often,” stated Dr. Karen A. Chapman, Director of DOH-Okaloosa. “These simple precautions may lessen your risk of exposure to the virus or transmission to others.”

Be sure to watch for symptoms of the flu, such as headache, fever, a severe cough, runny nose or body aches. Contact your primary care physician or a local hospital immediately if symptoms appear.

DOH-Okaloosa urges the following preventive steps for the flu:

- Get re-vaccinated EVERY FLU SEASON because strains of flu viruses change each year.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- If you have a chronic illness, or are pregnant, contact your healthcare provider if you have an illness that might be influenza. You may benefit from treatment with prescription antiviral medication.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Wash your hands often throughout the day, whether you are sick or not, with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Chronic illnesses that put you at risk for more severe influenza and complications, no matter how old you are, include: diabetes, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cancer, and neurological and developmental disorders. People who are obese are also at increased risk of severe influenza.

To locate flu vaccine, contact your healthcare provider or visit flushot.healthmap.org. For more information on flu prevention, visit 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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