

NEWS RELEASE

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Spread Holiday Cheer, not the Flu

BISMARCK, N.D. – In recognition of National Influenza Vaccination Week, Dec. 2-8, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is reminding all North Dakotans of the importance of receiving the flu vaccine before the holidays.

“Everyone six months and older should be vaccinated, regardless of their health status,” said Jenny Galbraith, Immunization Surveillance Coordinator with the NDDoH. “Anyone can get the flu, including healthy individuals, and getting the flu vaccine is the easiest and safest way to protect yourself, your friends and your family this season.”

The flu vaccine not only can prevent someone from getting sick but can reduce the risk of influenza-associated hospitalization and death. Studies have also shown that if someone gets sick while vaccinated, they have less severe illness, reduce their risk of being hospitalized, and spend fewer days in the hospital when they are hospitalized.

Flu can be serious for anyone, but vaccination is especially important for people who are at greater risk of complications from the flu. This includes young children, older adults, those with compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions, pregnant women, American Indians, or Alaskan Natives.

North Dakota is seeing early influenza activity, with 414 laboratory-identified cases reported to the NDDoH so far this season. Influenza can be unpredictable, and activity could increase at any time. People who have not had their influenza vaccine this season should get it as soon as possible; it takes about two weeks for the vaccine to provide full protection. For information about vaccine availability, contact your local public health unit, health care provider, or pharmacist. For information about influenza, visit www.ndflu.com.

Remember, the flu vaccine can protect not only you, but everyone around you.

– 30 –