



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VACCINATION, SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS PROVIDE PROTECTION AGAINST INFLUENZA *Flu Shots for Children, Adults Available through St. Charles County's Immunization Clinic*

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – A vaccination and other simple precautions provide the best protection against the spread of the influenza virus (the flu). To help safeguard our community against this contagious respiratory illness, the Division of Health Services' Immunization Clinic, located at 1650 Boones Lick Road in St. Charles, now offers flu shots for adults and children.

Flu vaccines have a long track record of safety and effectiveness. Several studies indicate that vaccinations reduce the risk of doctor visits due to flu complications by more than 50 percent. It takes approximately two weeks for vaccine antibodies to develop, so a shot received this month will protect you before the onset of the "season," which typically runs from November through March.

To improve effectiveness, scientists from the CDC, the World Health Organization and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice analyze circulating influenza viruses to formulate the composition of the vaccine. For the 2016-2017 season, this analysis determined:

- That the quadrivalent vaccine be designed to protect against four different flu viruses (an H1N1 virus, an H3N2 virus, and two influenza B viruses) and be appropriate for all individuals ages six months or older.
- That a pediatric influenza vaccine be offered with a smaller dosage of the quadrivalent vaccine, so that it may be appropriate for children ages six months to 35 months.
- That a "high-dose" vaccine be made available for those 65 years of age or older. This type of vaccine contains four times the amount of antigen in a regular flu shot to boost the body's ability to create antibodies against influenza virus.
- That the nasal spray method has not been as effective in protecting individuals against influenza as the traditional shot method. As a result, the nasal spray will not be offered by the Immunization Clinic this year.

Flu shots through the Immunization Clinic are \$35 for the quadrivalent vaccine, \$40 for the pediatric vaccine and \$55 for the "high-dose" vaccine. These costs are covered by most insurance policies and are waived for children participating in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program or those eligible for the Adult 317 program. For more information about the vaccines or the VFC and 317 programs, please visit www.sccmo.org/immunizations.

Immunization Clinic nurses provide vaccinations every weekday except Thursday. Hours are 8:30 to 11 a.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., with extended hours until 5:30 p.m., on Tuesdays. In addition, the facility's hours are extended until 7 p.m., on the second Tuesday of each month. Patients are asked to schedule an appointment for their visit, but walk-in customers are accepted on a space-available basis from 8:30 to 11 a.m., on Fridays. To schedule an appointment, please call 636-949-1857.

(MORE)

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“Annual vaccination and other prevention activities deliver the best protection against the flu,” Division of Health Services Director *Sara Evers* said. “For most who become sick, the flu causes symptoms such as fever, cough, stuffy nose, sore throat, headache, vomiting or general fatigue, but for others — especially young children and those 65 or older — the illness can be life-threatening. Getting vaccinated now and continuing with preventative actions throughout the flu season will minimize opportunities for the flu to spread and improve the well-being of all within our community.”

Simple Precautions: While the best way to prevent the spread of influenza is the flu shot, there are other steps you and your family can take:

- The first step is to regularly wash hands with warm, soapy water.
- Additionally, covering your mouth whenever you sneeze or cough and throwing away soiled tissues will minimize opportunities for germs to spread.
- Finally, those who do become sick should limit close contact with others and stay home until at least 24 hours after a fever subsides.

Preventing the flu is a community-wide effort. Along with individuals taking steps to prevent the spread, medical providers report the incidence of positive cases each week to the health department to help track the illness in our community. The Division of Health Services compiles this information and issues a weekly report on the number of diagnosed cases. This report is available for viewing online at <http://www.sccmo.org/407/Public-Health-Reports> or on social media through the [Department of Public Health's Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

Through the efforts of its three divisions — Environmental Health and Protection, Health Services and Humane Services — the St. Charles County Department of Public Health provides a wide range of services that enhance the well-being of the community. To learn how the department assists this region or to find out about volunteer opportunities with any of the divisions, visit www.sccmo.org/PublicHealth or call 636-949-7400.

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