



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Influenza Activity in Connecticut is on the Rise

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national influenza activity has been rapidly increasing in recent weeks and many states, including Connecticut, are experiencing a wide spread level of activity. The traditional flu season begins early October and runs through May and individuals who have not yet received a flu shot this year are encouraged to do so. Director of Health, Caroline C. Baisley, emphasized, “Getting vaccinated for seasonal influenza is the best way to provide protection against influenza viruses. It’s not too late to get vaccinated, it takes up to two weeks after vaccination for protection (immunity) to develop in the majority of adults.”

Influenza (commonly called “flu”) is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. These viruses are spread when a person who has the flu virus coughs, sneezes or touches a surface handled by others. The flu can be mild or severe and infects millions of Americans every year. On average, more than 225,000 people are hospitalized annually for seasonal flu-related complications. Influenza can affect anyone. People at high risk include children under the age of 5, pregnant women, adults over 65 and people with underlying medical conditions.

In addition to getting vaccinated against influenza, follow these recommendations to protect yourself from respiratory illnesses:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** Keep your distance from others when you are sick.
- **Stay home from work or school when you are sick** for at least 24 hours after your fever (100° F and above) is gone, except to seek medical care. Your fever should be gone without using fever reducing medications or antiviral drugs. It could take up to one week or more to feel better.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** when you sneeze or cough (tissue or sleeve)
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water frequently. If soap and water is not available, alcohol-based cleaners (at least 60% alcohol ingredient) are effective.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth** germs are spread this way.
- **Get plenty of sleep, water, healthy food and exercise**
- **Seek medical care early.** Consult your health care provider immediately if you develop flu symptoms.

For available flu vaccine, contact your health care provider.