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Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE  
Commissioner of Health

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**Mayor Barrett and City of Milwaukee Health Department Caution:  
Don't Invite the Flu to Your Home for the Holidays**

*Local officials urge Milwaukee residents to take steps to protect against the flu*

MILWAUKEE – Before the holiday season gets into full swing, Mayor Tom Barrett and the City of Milwaukee Health Department are sending a message: Don't invite the flu to your home for the holidays.

"The start to flu season is just around the corner," said Mayor Tom Barrett. "To protect yourself, your family, and your co-workers, I urge everyone over 6 months of age to get vaccinated well before the flu arrives. Even healthy people can get the flu and spread it to others."

Influenza (the flu) is among the most common respiratory illnesses in the United States, infecting millions of people each year. The virus is spread through the air when someone who is sick coughs, sneezes, or speaks. Symptoms of seasonal flu include fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, and fatigue. Though common, the flu can be serious, leading to hospitalization and sometimes death in the most vulnerable populations, including infants and young children, the elderly, and those with chronic illnesses.

"Flu season is unpredictable," said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. "Each year, different strains of the influenza virus can spread. That is why the single best way to protect yourself and your family is to get vaccinated each year."

The vaccine is recommended for all individuals over 6 months of age, especially those at greatest risk for serious complications including adults 65 and older, children younger than 5, and pregnant women.

The City of Milwaukee Health Department also encourages frequent hand washing with soap and water, and covering coughs and sneezes with your sleeve to reduce the spread of germs. Those experiencing symptoms should remain home from work or school, get rest, and drink plenty of fluids.

Flu vaccine remains widely available this year through local health care providers and retail pharmacies. City of Milwaukee Health Department clinics have a limited supply of flu vaccine available to uninsured children and adults.

For more information, visit [www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health).

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*Think Health. Act Now!*

