



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653 phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990
web site: www.milwaukee.gov/health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2013

Contact: Sarah DeRoo
Office (414) 286-3548
Cell (414) 708-4060

**City of Milwaukee Health Department Reminds Residents
“Don’t Invite the Flu Home for the Holidays”**

As flu season arrives, health officials urge everyone over 6 months of age to get vaccinated today

MILWAUKEE – With the official start to the holiday season just around the corner, the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) is reminding all residents that now is a great time to get your flu vaccination. The call comes as confirmed cases of flu have been reported statewide, including in Milwaukee.

“Flu season so often coincides with the time of year when we gather with family and friends,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “I urge everyone over 6 months of age to visit their doctor, clinic, or pharmacy to get vaccinated today to protect yourself and your loved ones. 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 has officially arrived,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “Each year, different strains of the flu virus can spread, that is why the single best way to protect yourself and your family is to get vaccinated.”

The vaccine is recommended for all individuals over 6 months of age. Those especially at risk include people with certain medical conditions like asthma, diabetes and lung disease, as well as the elderly, pregnant women and young children. Each year an average of 20,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized due to flu complications.

Along with getting your vaccine, the City of Milwaukee Health Department encourages frequent hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes with your sleeve to reduce the spread of the flu, as well as other viruses that circulate during the winter months. Those experiencing symptoms should remain home from work or school, get rest, and drink plenty of fluids. Antiviral medications available from your doctor should also be taken as prescribed to lessen the severity of flu symptoms.

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

For more information, visit www.milwaukee.gov/health.

###

Think Health. Act Now!

