



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
December 9, 2013

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

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

National Influenza Vaccination Week serves as reminder it's not too late to get vaccinated

MILWAUKEE – During National Influenza Vaccination Week (Dec. 8-14), the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) is reminding all city residents that it's not too late to get the flu vaccine. Cases of influenza have been confirmed statewide, hospitalizing 23 individuals in the city of Milwaukee alone.

"Flu season is officially here," said Mayor Tom Barrett. "I urge everyone over 6 months of age to visit their doctor, clinic, or pharmacy to get vaccinated today. Even healthy people can get the flu and spread it to others, especially during this time of year when we gather with family and friends."

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.

"The last thing you want to bring home this holiday season is the flu," said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. "The single best way to protect yourself and your family is to get the flu vaccine."

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 through local health care providers and retail pharmacies. Individuals looking for a location to receive vaccine near their home can use the flu vaccine finder at www.milwaukee.gov/health.

###

Think Health. Act Now!

