



Tom Barrett
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Commissioner of Health

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City of Milwaukee Health Department Reports Increase in Flu Hospitalizations
Officials confirm H1N1 strain impacting young and middle-age adults this season

MILWAUKEE – As flu season continues to increase statewide, 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, now hospitalizing more than 100 individuals in the city of Milwaukee alone.

“This is the time of year when we typically see flu cases increase,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “If you have not already received your flu vaccine, 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.”

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.

“This year, we are seeing an increase in young and middle-age adults who are being hospitalized with complications related to the seasonal flu,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “The single best way to protect yourself and your family is to get the flu vaccine. If you do get sick, pay attention to the severity of your symptoms, and contact a doctor for antiviral medication if necessary.”

The flu 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.

Along with vaccination, antiviral medications can be highly effective in reducing the severity and duration of illness in individuals at high risk for complications associated with the flu as well as individuals with persistent or severe symptoms. Antivirals are in good supply and available from health care providers.

The MHD 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, and take antivirals if recommended.

Flu vaccine remains available through local health care providers and retail pharmacies, though area residents are advised to call ahead to determine availability. Individuals looking for a location to receive vaccine near their home can use the flu vaccine finder at www.milwaukee.gov/health.

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