

September 23, 2019

FALL MEANS IT'S TIME FOR A FLU VACCINE

The arrival of fall means it's time to think about flu season and your annual vaccine for protection against a virus that can mean lost days of work and school later.



The Florida Department of Health urges all Floridians older than six months to get vaccinated before Halloween on Oct. 31. While Florida's flu season peaks in the early months of the year, early vaccination ensures protection during the holiday season when many gather for celebrations and family events.

In addition to taking precautions such as proper handwashing and sanitizing frequently-handled surfaces, it's important to avoid this serious illness by getting the seasonal flu vaccine. Flu strains change from year to year so a new vaccine is needed at the start of each season. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for your body to develop protection against the flu.

The flu is the deadliest infectious disease in the United States. Each year, nearly 35,000 people die of the flu or of its many complications, such as pneumonia.

No, you cannot catch the flu from the flu shot. The viruses used to make the vaccine are dead, and incapable of causing the illness. While certain people may feel a tired and achy the day after the shot, that is a normal response as the immune system develops antibodies. Those symptoms pale in comparison to the high fever, body aches and other symptoms a full-blown case of the flu can bring.

Each of the Tampa Bay area county health departments and most pharmacies and primary care physician offices offer flu shots. For information about the flu and to find other locations to get the seasonal vaccine, go to www.FluFreeFlorida.com or call your county's health office at:

- Citrus (352) 527-0068
- Hardee (863) 773-4161
- Hernando (353) 540-6800
- Highlands (863) 386-6040
- Hillsborough (813) 307-8000
- Manatee (941) 748-0747
- Pasco (727) 619-0300
- Pinellas (727) 824-6900
- Polk (863) 519-7900
- Sarasota (941) 861-2900

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