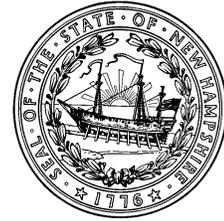


NH Department of Health and Human Services  
129 Pleasant Street – Hugh Gallen State Office Park  
Concord, NH 03301



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**CONTACT**  
**Public Information Office**  
**603-271-9388**  
**Twitter: NHDHHSPIO**  
**Facebook: NHDepartmentOfHealthAndHumanServices**

## **DHHS Recognizes National Influenza Vaccination Week** *It's Not Too Late to Get Your Annual Flu Vaccine*

**Concord, NH** – It's not too late to get your flu vaccination and vaccine manufacturers are projecting that there will be plenty of flu vaccine to go around. The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Immunization Program is proud to join forces with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New Hampshire's many health care providers and community partners in recognizing National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW), December 4-10, 2011 as an opportunity to highlight the importance of getting an annual flu vaccination.

NIVW was established to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination as well as to foster greater use of flu vaccine after the holiday season into January and beyond. The flu season typically runs from October to May and has not really begun in New Hampshire yet so there is still plenty of time to get a flu vaccine for this year.

"We have to remember that influenza kills roughly 25,000 people in this country every year and hospitalizes over 200,000 annually," said Dr. José Montero, Director of Public Health at DHHS. "This is not just a cold. Though many people only become mildly ill, anyone, no matter how healthy or what age, can contract the flu and be out of commission for days."

Immunity from the influenza vaccine does not last from season to season plus the flu strains that are circulating, and thus the composition of the vaccine, change ever year so it is important to be vaccinated again even if you were last year. CDC recommends that everyone age 6 months or older receive an annual flu vaccine, particularly those at greater risk of serious flu-related complications like pneumonia that can lead to hospitalization and even death.

- Children younger than 5 years olds, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- People with certain medical conditions like asthma, diabetes (types 1 and 2), or heart and lung disease
- People 65 years and older
- People who care for anyone in one or more of the high-risk groups above.

Other people for whom vaccination is especially important are:

- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

- more -

- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
  - Health care workers
  - Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
  - Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 5 years of age with particular emphasis on vaccinating contacts of children younger than 6 months of age (children younger than 6 months are at highest risk of flu-related complications but are too young to get vaccinated)

Symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, running or stuffy nose, muscle aches (a hallmark of flu which is not present with a cold), fatigue and miserable days spent in bed instead of at work or school. While flu vaccine is available at doctor's offices and health departments, it is also available at many pharmacies, workplaces, and other retail and clinic locations throughout the State.

For more information about flu vaccination, visit CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>, the DHHS website at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/index.htm> or call the New Hampshire Immunization Program at (603) 271-4482.

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