



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Health Commissioner Gets Flu Shot: Encourages All Vermonters to Get Vaccinated

– If it's time to think about snow tires, then it's time to get your flu shot –

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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health is advising people to get vaccinated early this flu season, as vaccine is now widely available at public clinics and with health care providers. Flu vaccine is safe and effective.

“If it's time to think about snow tires, then it's time to get your flu shot or spray” said Health Commissioner Wendy Davis, MD. “Getting vaccinated is the single best way to protect yourself and those around you from getting the flu. I recommend getting vaccinated before the start of the holidays.”

Getting vaccinated with the flu shot or nasal spray now will give protection that lasts throughout the flu season.

Dr. Davis received her flu shot today at the Health Department's Burlington office from Angie Thomas, RN, of the Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties (VNA).

Last year, more than 200,000 Vermonters – nearly one-third of the state's population – got vaccinated against the 2009 H1N1 flu. Vermont had among the highest vaccination rates in the nation, especially for school-age children and adults with health conditions.

“Even if you got the 2009 H1N1 or the regular seasonal flu vaccine last season, you need to get vaccinated with this season's flu vaccine,” Dr. Davis said.

The 2010-2011 flu vaccine will protect against three different strains of highly contagious flu viruses expected to cause illness this season: the 2009 H1N1 virus, as well an H3N2 and an influenza B virus.

While vaccination is the single best protection against the flu, taking simple everyday actions can help keep illness from spreading:

- Cover your cough or sneeze every time with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often and well with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Plan ahead. Stock up with food and supplies in case you need to stay home for awhile.
- Stay home if you're sick for at least 24 hours after fever is gone.

The Health Department has no reports yet of flu activity in the state, but that doesn't mean flu viruses are not already circulating here, Dr. Davis said.

Flu symptoms include fever, body aches, tiredness, headache, dry cough and fever. While most people recover in a week or two, many thousands of people in the U.S. die each year from complications of the flu, and many more are hospitalized.

Through its Vaccines for Children program, the Vermont Department of Health provides influenza vaccine to health care providers to immunize children age 6 months through 18 years old. This year, the Health Department has ordered 25,000 more doses of flu vaccine for children than in past years.

Parents can schedule a flu shot by calling their child's health care provider. Seasonal flu shots are also given at public clinics conducted throughout the state by the home health agencies and the Visiting Nurse Association, and also in many grocery stores and pharmacies.

To find a flu shot clinic in you area, go to the Health Department's website at healthvermont.gov or dial 2-1-1.

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