



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Health Commissioner Reminds Vermonters to Get A Flu Shot – It's Not Too Late

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BURLINGTON – A few years ago, it may have been unusual to see children cough into their sleeves, hand sanitizers at schools, sanitary wipes for grocery carts, and employers insisting their workers stay home if they are sick.

As flu season approaches, these actions can make a big difference in preventing the spread of illness. There is still time for Vermonters to get a flu shot, which is recommended for nearly everyone age 6 months or older. Vaccine is available at primary care provider offices, public clinics and local pharmacies.

After 2009, flu prevention efforts became more widely accepted at workplaces, schools, hospitals and other public places where close contact can easily spread the influenza virus from person to person.

“The H1N1 pandemic of 2009/2010 helped everyone understand how unpredictable and serious an illness the flu can be. It was evident that people wanted to do the right thing to protect themselves and everyone around them,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD.

When people get a flu shot they are both protecting themselves and helping to prevent the spread of influenza to those at higher risk, such as babies too young to be vaccinated, those with serious health conditions, and older people with weaker immune systems.

The 2011-2012 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 also help keep illness from spreading: cover your cough, wash hands often and well, stay home and away from others when you're sick.

Dr. Chen encourages Vermonters to be thoughtful of others during this flu season.

Pediatric doses of flu vaccine are available at Health Department District Offices if a child (6 months through age 18) doesn't have a primary care provider or health insurance. Call the closest district office to make an appointment.

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