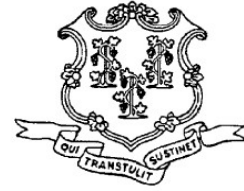


# News



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **State Health Department Announces Flu Activity in Connecticut Continues to Rise**

*Flu vaccine best defense against influenza*

**Hartford** – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that flu activity in the state continues to be widespread and encourages residents to take steps to prevent the flu.

“We have seen a sharp increase in flu activity over the past few weeks here in Connecticut,” said DPH Commissioner Dr. Jewel Mullen. “People should take steps to avoid getting the flu, including getting vaccinated. Even though the flu is here, it’s still not too late to get vaccinated.”

Statewide, there has been an increase in emergency department visits, outpatient visits and hospitalizations related to influenza and influenza-like illness. So far this season, there have been 1676 laboratory-confirmed reports of influenza.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourage all people over the age of six months old to be vaccinated. Vaccines are encouraged for everyone, but especially for high-risk groups, including children from 6 months to 18 years of age, women who will be pregnant during the flu season, people at least 50 years old, anyone with certain chronic medical conditions and people who live in nursing homes or long-term care facilities.

The influenza season runs from October-May, with activity usually peaking between December and March. Vaccination is the most effective way to protect yourself, and others, from the flu. Individuals can continue to be vaccinated throughout the course of the flu season. This year’s flu vaccine includes three different strains of the flu virus and is a good match to the strains circulating this year. People are urged to get vaccinated for the flu, even if they were vaccinated for seasonal flu last year.

Whether you get the flu vaccine or not, there are ways you can avoid the flu this year and stay healthy:

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- **Call your healthcare provider if you think you have the flu.** Antiviral medications can help if taken early in the illness. Seek medical care immediately if the person develops any of the following symptoms:
  - Fast breathing, trouble breathing or bluish skin color.
  - Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen (adults).
  - Confusion or sudden dizziness.
  - Not drinking enough fluids, not being able to eat, or severe or persistent vomiting.
  - Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough.
  - Not waking up, being so irritable that the child does not want to be held or not interacting (children).
  - Fever with a rash (children).
  - No tears when crying or significantly fewer wet diapers than normal (children).

To get vaccinated for the flu:

- Check with your regular health care provider to see if they have the flu vaccine available.
- Visit the HealthMap Vaccine Finder at <http://flushot.healthmap.org/> to find a flu clinic near you.

For more information on influenza and vaccination, visit the DPH website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph).

*The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph) or call (860) 509-7270.*

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