

News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 26, 2018

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PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES RESIDENTS TO GET A FLU SHOT ***The flu vaccine is now available and residents should not wait to be vaccinated***

Hartford – As this year’s flu season gets underway, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is urging all Connecticut residents to get a flu vaccination. The flu vaccine is currently available and residents should not wait to be vaccinated.

“Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death,” according to DPH Commissioner Dr. Raul Pino. “Flu vaccines are safe, effective, and readily available.”

“The single best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is to get vaccinated – either by the flu nasal spray or injection,” added Dr. Pino. “People should talk to their doctor about getting a flu vaccination for themselves and other family members.”

The influenza season runs from October-May and individuals can continue to be vaccinated throughout the course of the flu season. Nationally, manufacturers expect to supply between 163-168 million doses of flu vaccine this year, with almost all vaccine delivered to providers by the middle of November.

“I strongly recommend anyone who has not yet received the flu vaccine to get one soon,” urged Dr. Pino. “The protection provided by a flu shot against contracting the virus or lessening the severity and duration of the illness if you get the flu cannot be understated.”

To date, a total of 23 hospitalized patients with laboratory-confirmed influenza admitted between August 26, and October 20, 2018 have been reported. Of these, 15 were associated with type A (subtype unspecified), 4 with influenza A (H3N2), and 4 with influenza B viruses. Two flu-associated deaths have been reported during this current season including one in an individual greater than 65 years of age and one in an individual 50-64 years of age. For the most recent information about influenza activity in Connecticut, please see the [weekly influenza update](#) posted on the DPH website.

The 2017-18 influenza season will be remembered for its early onset and widespread flu activity, which were being simultaneously observed throughout the country. In Connecticut, rapidly increasing widespread flu activity and flu-associated hospitalizations were observed starting in December. A major flu activity peak was recorded in early February, comprised primarily of influenza A (H3N2). A second smaller peak was observed in early April, comprised primarily of influenza B. In total, over 13,000 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases, over 3,700 flu-associated hospitalizations, and over 175 flu-associated deaths were reported in Connecticut during the 2017-18 influenza season.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that is spread through the air and by direct contact with respiratory droplets. Typical symptoms of the flu include sudden fever, aching muscles, sore throat, coughing, runny nose, headache, and eye pain. While anyone, particularly individuals who are not vaccinated, can contract the flu, the illness is especially dangerous for certain groups, including: people aged 65 and older; children younger than 2 years old; people of any age with chronic medical conditions, like asthma, diabetes, congestive heart failure, or lung disease; and pregnant women.

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