

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

November 12, 2015

Dear Residents,

The 2015-2016 flu season has started and Floridians are urged to get vaccinated to protect themselves and others against the flu. Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

The flu vaccine is safe and continues to be the best way to protect yourself and others from the flu. The flu vaccine is offered in many locations including pharmacies, clinics, employers and schools. Contact your physician, county health department or visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/flu-prevention/locate-a-flu-shot.html> to find a flu vaccine center near you. The national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that all individuals six months of age and older receive the flu vaccine each year. Since infants younger than 6 months of age are too young to get vaccinated against influenza, it is important that family members (including pregnant mothers) and other caregivers for these children be vaccinated to help protect them from the disease.

It is especially important that people who do become infected with the influenza virus stay home when they are sick and parents keep sick children at home to prevent spreading the flu.

Additional steps to prevent flu include coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow, washing your hands frequently, and keeping your hands away from your face. Symptoms of the flu include headache, fever, severe cough, runny nose or body aches. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, see your primary care provider immediately for guidance on treatment. Early treatment with antivirals is important and can help people get better more quickly as well as help to prevent severe complications.

The best way to keep yourself and your family safe and healthy during flu season is to:

1) Get vaccinated, 2) Stay home if you are sick, and 3) See your doctor if experiencing flu-like symptoms.

For more information please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.

Sincerely,

Florida Department of Health in Martin County