



News Release

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Flu vaccine available now: stop the flu before it starts

State recommends getting flu vaccine to protect yourself and your family from illness

OLYMPIA — Flu season is almost here and the time is now to get vaccinated to protect yourself, your family, and your community from the flu. “Flu seasons are unpredictable, so it’s important to get your flu vaccine as soon as it’s available, before people start getting sick,” says State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes. “Getting flu vaccine now will provide protection throughout the season. It’s not too early.”

Yearly flu vaccination is recommended for everyone age six months and older. It’s especially important for young kids; pregnant women; people 65 and older; caregivers; and people with medical conditions, like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and neurological conditions.

Vaccine is already available from many health care providers, including pharmacies, and there are more vaccine options this year than ever before.

The vaccine is available as a flu shot or nasal spray. Some vaccines will protect against four different strains of flu virus; there’s an egg-free version for those with allergies; and a vaccine that uses a smaller needle than the typical flu shot. Ask your health care professional which vaccine is best for you and your family.

The [Healthy People 2020 goal](#) for flu vaccination coverage is 80 percent or higher. Only about 47 percent of people in Washington were vaccinated against flu last season so there’s work to be done. Communities are better protected from flu if vaccination rates are higher.

The state health department bought more than 754,000 doses of flu vaccine for kids through age 18. Kids can get the vaccine from their regular health care providers. Kids under nine years old may need two doses for the best protection.

Health professionals may charge an office visit fee and an administration fee to give the vaccine. People who can't afford the administration fee can ask to have it waived.

For adults, many health plans cover flu vaccines. To find a health care provider or immunization clinic, use the [flu vaccine locator](#), contact [your local health agency](#), or the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588. Information about [flu and flu vaccine](#) is available on our website

This year, the Department of Health is using a video that features real families reminding people to get a yearly flu vaccine. The video also features the Secretary of Health, John Weisman. It's on the [agency's flu resource page](#).

The [Department of Health website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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