

# Wisconsin Department of Health Services: Influenza is already making the rounds in Wisconsin

Posted on Friday, Sep 22, 2017

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## **State health officials say it's not too early to protect yourself and people around you by getting a flu shot**

State health officials say the flu season is getting an early start in Wisconsin.

"We've already had reports of flu cases and hospitalizations due to the flu, so we want to encourage people to get their flu shots as soon as possible," said State Health Officer Karen McKeown.

From September 1- September 22, 2017, there have been 19 confirmed cases of influenza in Wisconsin and 8 hospitalizations, compared to 5 confirmed cases and two hospitalizations during the same period in 2016.

The flu shot is safe and effective for people six months old and older. However, there are certain people who are at a greater risk of getting the flu and could have serious health complications if they do come down with the virus.

Those who are strongly encouraged to receive the flu vaccination include:

- People 65 years old and older.
- People with chronic health issues, like heart disease and diabetes.
- Pregnant women. The flu shot protects the mom-to-be and provides protection for her baby for several months after birth.
- People who are around other people at work or school.

“By protecting ourselves with a flu shot, we’re also helping to protect our family, friends, co-workers, and the rest of our community,” McKeown added.

Supplies of the vaccine are plentiful and available through health care providers and many pharmacies.

In addition to the flu shot, there are simple steps we can all take to protect ourselves and others from illness:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your upper sleeve, and try to avoid touching your face with your hand. If you use a tissue, throw it away after one use.
- Never share drinking cups, straws, and utensils.
- When possible, avoid being exposed to people who are sick with flu-like symptoms.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest, and do not smoke.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces, like doorknobs, the refrigerator handles, your phone, and faucets.
- If you’re sick, stay home. Get rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid using tobacco and alcohol.

Information about the 2017-2018 flu season can be found in the [DHS Weekly Influenza Report](#).

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