



Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

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The Flu Vaccine is Your Best Defense

Flu season is approaching. You can protect yourself and your family from the flu this season by getting a flu vaccine. It's the first and most important step to fight the flu. The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD), along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend everyone ages six months and older receive a flu shot. The flu season may begin as early as October and last as late as May. The flu shot may take up to two weeks to provide full protection so it is advised individuals receive a flu shot before the flu season begins. BEDHD received notice of the first confirmed local case of flu in late September.

Anyone can get the flu, including healthy children and adults. Symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fever, vomiting, and diarrhea. Unlike the common cold, flu symptoms usually appear suddenly. For most people, symptoms last from a few days to two weeks. Some people are at a greater risk of more severe symptoms and complications. These include individuals aged 65 and older, those with certain chronic conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, and children younger than five years old (especially infants).

Each year, the flu causes millions of illnesses and tens of thousands of deaths. The CDC reports that influenza is a leading cause of vaccine-preventable deaths for children in the U.S. In the 2017-2018 flu season, 180 influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported nationally, with two of those deaths occurring in Michigan. Receiving a vaccination for the flu is the most effective method to prevent getting the flu. If you receive a vaccination and still get the flu, the vaccine may make flu symptoms milder. The vaccine will also prevent you from spreading the flu to others, including those at risk of more serious illness.

In addition to vaccination, the CDC also recommends washing hands frequently, staying home from work or school if ill, and taking anti-viral medications if prescribed by a doctor. Antiviral medications are prescribed to some people to reduce the risk of complications from the flu and the length of illness. Antivirals work best if taken within the first 48 hours of when symptoms begin.

Contact your health care provider or local pharmacy and get vaccinated today. BEDHD offers flu vaccinations for youth between the ages of 6 months and 18 years of age. For more information, visit www.barryeatonhealth.org/immunizations. Call (517) 541-2630 or (269) 945-7133 to schedule an appointment.