



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA PRESSLER, MD
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 8, 2018

18-005

Department of Health Advises Public to Get Flu Shot

HONOLULU – Flu activity in Hawaii usually picks up after the holidays and while it's too early to know if we also will see the same heavy flu activity occurring in the rest of the nation, the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) is advising everyone six months and older to get a flu shot as soon as possible to protect against influenza.

"Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older and is especially important for young children, pregnant women, seniors 65 years and older, and people with high-risk conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart and lung disease, or a compromised immune system," said State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park. "The flu can make chronic health problems even worse and trigger asthma attacks by causing further inflammation of the lungs and airways, while those with chronic congestive heart failure may experience a worsening of their condition."

Flu is a serious illness that sickens millions of people and causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths in the U.S. each year. Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.

A recent survey by the CDC found that nationally, less than 40 percent of people had received the flu vaccine by early November. While the flu season typically runs from October to May on the mainland, Hawaii sees flu year-round, so it's not too late to get vaccinated.

The flu vaccine is widely-available at many doctors' offices, clinics and pharmacies. For a list of vaccinating pharmacies, visit the DOH Vaccine Locator at <http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/vaccines-immunizations/vaccine-locators/>.

In addition to getting vaccinated, DOH encourages the public to follow good personal hygiene habits to prevent spreading germs to others, such as washing hands frequently, covering your

mouth when coughing or sneezing and staying home from work, school, and other gatherings when sick.

Treatment with antiviral drugs, prescription medicines that can be used to treat illness and reduce complications from the flu, work best when begun within 48 hours of getting sick, but can still be helpful when given later in the course of illness. People who think they have the flu should contact their healthcare provider for testing and treatment right away.

More information about the flu is available at
http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease_listing/influenza-flu/.

#

|