

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 10/27/2016

TO: Grant County Media

FOR INFORMATION CONTACTHeather Massart, Public Information Officer
Phone: 509-766-7960 ext. 16**Be a Flu Fighter in 2016-2017**
A flu shot is your best protection.

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Fall brings crisp mornings, colorful leaves, pumpkins on porches, and holiday travel plans. Don't invite the unwelcomed visitor- flu to your family's holiday gathering. Thankfully, there's still time to protect you and your family; the flu vaccine has arrived and is now widely available in Grant County.

The holiday season brings us together with friends and family to share memories and good times not to share germs and illnesses like the flu. The Grant County Health District urges all residents **6 months and older to get their flu shot as soon as possible.** Flu activity typically increases in the winter months when people spend more time indoors around each other. People who haven't been vaccinated against flu still have time to get the vaccine before the season reaches its peak.

Everyone 6 months of age and older who do not have any underlying health conditions should get a flu shot this season. Some children 6 months through 8 years of age may need 1 or 2 doses, check with your child's doctor. People with egg allergies should check with their doctor to see if they may be able to receive the vaccine.

Some people may be at increased risk for getting the flu and developing flu related complications. Flu can make existing health conditions worse and can lead to hospitalization and even death.

Are you at increased risk?

- People with asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease, heart disease, and people over 65 years old are among those who are at a higher risk for developing flu-related complications.
- Infants are at an increase risk for flu, caregivers who are sick should wear a mask when caring for an infant.
- Pregnant women are at serious risk of flu complications. The flu shot is safe and recommended at any stage of pregnancy. When expectant moms get a flu shot it protects the baby inside too — for up to six months after birth. Get a flu shot to protect you and your growing family.

What's for New for the 2016-2017 flu season:

- Only injectable flu vaccines (flu shot) are recommended this season.
- The nasal spray (FluMist®) flu vaccine is not recommended this season.
- Flu shots do work. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) found that flu shots reduced a child's risk of ending up at the doctor's office sick with flu by more than 60% last season.



Why is FluMist® not recommended this season?

Studies conducted soon after the nasal spray flu vaccine was approved showed it was performing as well as (and sometimes better than) flu shots. Unfortunately, there have been recent problems with how well the nasal spray flu vaccine has worked. No one knows why this happened. Many people are trying to learn why, so that nasal spray flu vaccine may in the future again be an option for kids and parents.

Spreading the Flu

People with the flu can make others sick one day before symptoms appear and up to five days after symptoms begin. Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and throw it away. It is very important to wash your hands often. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers work well when soap and warm water are not available.

If you or a family member are sick with flu-like sickness, stay home from school or work for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine), unless you need to leave to receive medical care. If your doctor prescribes antiviral medicine, finish the entire prescription.

There are many flu vaccine choices, and they are available in various locations, including health care provider offices and pharmacies. People can also find a clinic by calling the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 or the GCHD at 509-766-7960.

Resources:

www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Flu

www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm

<http://flushot.healthmap.org/recommendations/recform.php>

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