



Promoting and Protecting Public Health

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Douglas County Health Department Urges Residents to Get Flu Shots

While influenza waited until late December last year to surface in Douglas County, the virus can arrive at any time and the Douglas County Health Department is urging residents to act now.

“This season the United States has 132 million doses of flu vaccine. That’s more than during any previous year and no delays are expected in production or supply,” Health Director Dr. Adi Pour said. “This year’s goal is to increase the numbers of children and health workers who get their flu shots.”

The most recent flu season peaked at 165 laboratory confirmed cases per week in Douglas County during late February, but the Health Department continued to receive reports of the illness into June. That compares to more than 700 laboratory confirmed cases during December 2003 at the height of the busiest flu season in the past decade.

It is recommended that people at high risk of complications from the flu get the vaccine. Those are: Children from six months until their fifth birthday. Pregnant women, people 50 years of age and older, people of any age with chronic medical conditions, and people who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

People who take care of those in high-risk groups also should get flu shots. It takes about two weeks for the vaccine to provide the antibodies that provide protection.

In addition to vaccine, the FluMist nasal spray has been approved for people from two years of age through 49 years who are not pregnant. That is a change from past years when it was recommended that people be at least five years old for the spray.

The Douglas County Health Department does not provide flu shots to the general public. Residents are encouraged to contact their family doctor, the Visiting Nurses Association and Kohl’s Pharmacy. Other retailers may host clinics.

“We cannot predict for certain how severe this season will be, but with plenty of vaccine we hope everyone can be protected,” Dr. Pour said.

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