



City and County of San Francisco

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San Francisco Department of Public Health Issues Seasonal Flu Guidelines

San Francisco, CA – Responding to an expected increase in the number of seasonal flu cases in San Francisco and throughout the Bay Area and State, the San Francisco Department of Public Health has issued guidelines for the public to follow in order to prevent the spread of the flu.

“The best way to stay healthy during flu season is to take some basic, yet easy prevention steps,” advised Tomas Aragon, MD, Health Officer for the City & County of San Francisco.

“Preventing the flu begins with getting a flu vaccine, available through your healthcare provider and at commercial outlets such as your local pharmacy, or at the health department's Adult Immunization & Travel Clinic located at 101 Grove St. Getting the flu vaccine can protect not just you, but everyone around you. Everyone aged six months or older should be vaccinated, "but especially infants, pregnant women, elderly and anyone with a chronic medical condition like asthma, heart disease, or diabetes."

Flu vaccine is available as a shot or an intranasal (nose) spray. Each has its advantages. Your doctor may recommend one or the other for you depending on your age and your health. Flu vaccine locations can be found on line at www.flu.gov. Because of the recent increase in flu cases in some regions and an uptick in the demand for this year's flu vaccine, health officials suggest calling ahead to check on vaccine availability before going to a local provider/pharmacy.

Health officials are also reminding the public to practice healthy habits that not only prevent the spread of seasonal flu, but other communicable diseases as well. Along with getting the flu vaccine, the healthy recommendations are:

- Wash hand often
- Cough & sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands
- Stay home when sick

The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans.

We shall ~ Assess and research the health of the community ~ Develop and enforce health policy ~ Prevent disease and injury ~
~ Educate the public and train health care providers ~ Provide quality, comprehensive, culturally-proficient health services ~ Ensure equal access to all ~

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Here are additional flu facts:

- The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.
- The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly.
- People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms: fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, or fatigue. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

Most people who get flu will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some people will develop complications (such as pneumonia) as a result of the flu, some of which can be life-threatening and result in death. Pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections are three examples of complications from flu. The flu can make chronic health problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic congestive heart failure may have worsening of this condition that is triggered by the flu.

Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems from influenza can happen at any age, but some people are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications if they get sick. This includes people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, and young children.

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