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Influenza Activity is Widespread in the Bay Area Not too late for flu shot

For Immediate Release

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SAN FRANCISCO (January 6, 2017) – Public Health Departments around the Bay Area are announcing that influenza activity is increasing and has reached “widespread” levels. Areas with the most influenza activity in the state include the Bay Area.

In the United States, influenza activity reaches its highest levels between December and February, and may continue through May, so it is not too late to get vaccinated against influenza. Public Health Officials recommend the annual flu vaccine for everyone six months of age and older, including pregnant women.

Flu specimens that have been tested match very closely to the current vaccine strains, which means the vaccine is expected to provide good protection against the flu. People at highest risk for severe complications from influenza include adults 65 years of age and older, children less than 5 years old, pregnant women and those with certain medical conditions like asthma, heart disease and weakened immune systems.

Dr. Tomas Aragon, San Francisco Health Officer, recommends that all individuals six months of age and older be vaccinated against influenza. “Influenza vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect you and your family from the flu,” said Aragon. “It’s not too late to get vaccinated.”

In San Francisco, the Health Department is working closely with long term care and assisted living facilities to offer guidance for flu prevention and response.

In addition to getting the vaccine, health officials advise people to take the following steps to protect themselves and loved ones from influenza.

- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue.
- If you do not have a tissue, cough into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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- Stay home when you are sick, and stay home until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue. People at higher risk of severe disease who show flu symptoms should contact their medical provider. Medical providers may prescribe antiviral medications that reduce the severity and duration of illness. Antibiotics are not effective against the flu.

For more information about influenza visit the [CDPH influenza web page](#). To find a flu vaccine at a location near you, visit the [Vaccine Finder](#).