



NEWS RELEASE

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Health Advisory: County urges residents to get flu vaccine



The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health urges residents to prepare for the upcoming flu season by getting a flu vaccine.

The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated. “Early vaccination will provide protection throughout flu season and into the spring,” said Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, Health Officer. “It is also important for residents to use their flu vaccination visit to get up-to-date on other vaccines they may need, including the pneumococcal vaccine. Adults over 50 are at higher risk of serious complications from flu and adults 65 years or older are now recommended two pneumococcal vaccines. This is the perfect time for our adult residents to assess their immunization history.”

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Flu can cause severe disease across all age groups. Everyone six months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every flu season: Nov. 1 to March 31. Vaccination should begin as soon as vaccine becomes available in early fall.

Flu is very contagious. To stop the spread of flu and other respiratory illnesses:

- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue in the trash after use.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after a cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay home from work or school if you get sick and limit contact with others.

Talk to your medical care provider regarding flu vaccination and to make sure you are up-to-date on other recommended vaccines.

Pneumococcal disease can cause severe infections of the lungs (pneumonia), bloodstream (bacteremia), and lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis). The best way to prevent pneumococcal disease is by getting vaccinated. Both the pneumococcal and flu vaccine is available at County Public Health clinics for those with no insurance or whose insurance does not cover the vaccine.

To make an appointment to receive the flu or pneumococcal vaccine at one of the Public Health Centers, call 1-800-722-4777 or visit the Public Health webpage at <http://www.sbcounty.gov/dph>. To find a vaccine provider nearest you visit <http://flushot.healthmap.org>. For more information about the flu and pneumococcal vaccine contact the Communicable Disease Section at 1-800-722-4794.