



BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Berrien County Health Officials Urge Flu Vaccination for Residents

(Berrien County) - Berrien County health officials are urging residents to get vaccinated against the flu. Every person six months and older should get the flu vaccine every year. Vaccination against the flu is emphasized for certain groups who are considered at highest risk of getting the flu virus, including young children, pregnant women, and adults who have chronic health conditions or are over the age of sixty-five. The Berrien County Health Department will offer walk-in flu vaccinations in its clinic locations in Benton Harbor and Niles every Friday starting on October 4th.

Anyone can get the flu, including healthy children and adults. Receiving a flu vaccine is the most effective method of preventing the flu. If you receive a vaccination and still get the flu, the vaccine may make flu symptoms milder and the length of illness shorter. The vaccine will also prevent you from spreading the flu to others, including those at risk of more serious illness.

According to the CDC, during the 2018-2019 flu season, the virus caused upwards of 60,000 deaths nationwide, including 136 influenza-related pediatric deaths, and over 600,000 hospitalizations throughout the United States.

Because it takes approximately two weeks for the flu shot to provide full protection against the influenza virus, it is recommended that residents receive their vaccine before the end of October. There are many locations where residents can receive a flu vaccine, including the Berrien County Health Department, area pharmacies, and through their family doctor's office. Most insurance plans fully cover the cost of the annual flu vaccine.

In addition to vaccination, everyone can help prevent flu with frequent handwashing and by covering coughs and sneezes. If you do get sick, it is recommended that you stay home from work, school, or other public gatherings to help reduce the spread of illness.

The Berrien County Health Department will offer walk-in flu vaccinations at their offices in Benton Harbor and Niles every Friday starting on October 4th, 2019. High-dose flu vaccinations and pneumonia vaccinations are also offered for those over age sixty-five. Most insurance plans will cover the cost for these vaccines, but no one will be turned away for an inability to pay.

For more information, visit the Berrien County Health Department website at www.bchdmi.org or call (269) 926-7121.

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