



BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Health Department Continues to Offer Opportunities for Flu Vaccination

“It’s not too late” to get a flu vaccine this year; residents urged to protect themselves

(Berrien County, MI) -- The Berrien County Health Department is encouraging all residents who have not yet received an annual flu vaccine to get it now. There are many opportunities to get a flu vaccination, including by attending one of the upcoming drive-thru flu vaccination clinics on November 4th in Chikaming Township and November 7th in Niles from 11am-4pm.

The final community drive-thru flu vaccination clinics hosted by the Berrien County Health Department are: Wednesday, November 4th from 11am-4pm, at the Chikaming Fire Department; and Saturday, November 7th from 11am-4pm in Niles at the South County Health Department Office. Walk-In flu vaccinations also continue to be offered at the Health Department offices in Niles and Benton Harbor on Fridays from 9am-4:30pm through November 20th, 2020. The Health Department offers the flu shot, (recommended for individuals over six months), and the nasal spray (FluMist) vaccine, that can be given to non-pregnant individuals between the ages of 2-49 years.

As coronavirus cases continue to increase in the area, residents are urged to get vaccinated against the flu as it is one of the best ways to reduce the amount of respiratory illness that will be circulating in the area and utilizing strained health care resources. Flu vaccinations are strongly urged for all people six months and older every year. Vaccination against the flu is especially important for certain groups who are considered at highest risk of serious flu illness, including young children, pregnant women, and adults who have chronic health conditions or are over the age of sixty-five. Each year, flu causes a number of preventable deaths in Berrien County; vaccination can reduce the risk of flu-related complications, hospitalizations, and deaths.

“We don’t know how severe the flu season will be this year,” says Nicki Britten, health officer, Berrien County Health Department. “But we know COVID-19 will still be circulating. Preventing the spread of influenza in our community will further reduce symptoms that could be confused with those of COVID-19 and help more people avoid unnecessary time at the doctor. It is especially important for everyone eligible to get their flu vaccine this year.”

With COVID-19 transmission widespread in the region, getting a flu shot can help reduce the risk of having the two illnesses spread across communities and lessen the burden on healthcare facilities. While preventive actions recommended to reduce risk of COVID-19 such as wearing a face covering and social distancing may also help to reduce the risk of flu transmission, it is important to get the flu vaccine, which is a safe and effective way to prevent serious flu illness. Additionally, these simple steps can help stop the spread of flu or other germs and help protect you from getting sick:

- Stay home when you are sick, which will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean your hands often, with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Flu vaccines are given at no cost; but residents are asked to bring their insurance cards. Most insurance plans will cover the cost for these vaccines, but no one will be turned away for an inability to pay. Find more information about the importance of an annual flu vaccination at www.bchdmi.org.

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