



Public Health Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Press Release

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS URGE EVERYONE TO GET VACCINATED FOR THE FLU

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – In an effort to prevent a “twindemic” of COVID-19 and seasonal flu, County of Santa Cruz Public Health is urging everyone six months and older to get vaccinated for flu early before the virus starts circulating.

Flu vaccination is part of a comprehensive public health strategy to reduce the burden of flu, but also to preserve health care resources for care of patients with COVID-19. Vaccines are available at doctors’ offices, and many pharmacies provide free and low-cost flu vaccinations to the public.

“Flu shots are the best way to protect yourself, your family, and the community from becoming seriously ill with the flu,” said Deputy Health Officer, Dr. David Ghilarducci. “Staying up-to-date on preventive vaccines is even more important during the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

It is important to get the flu vaccine every year because flu strains change over time. In California, flu activity usually begins to increase in late November or December. It takes a couple of weeks after vaccination for the body to build an immunity, so don't delay getting a shot.

“Vaccination not only reduces the risk of catching the flu, it also reduces the chance that you’ll be hospitalized, which will decrease the impact to our healthcare system,” said Chief of Public Health, Jennifer Herrera.

Flu and COVID-19 have similar symptoms including fever, cough, body aches, chills and fatigue. In most cases, people should not visit the emergency room for symptoms, but should call their healthcare provider and get tested for COVID-19 and flu. Those tested will likely have to stay home from work and isolate away from their families while awaiting results.

Besides getting immunized, you can also take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs:

- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you or your child are sick for at least 24 hours after symptoms go away.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, arm or disposable tissue. If you use disposable tissue, use hand sanitizer or wash your hands afterwards.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wear a mask.

Certain groups may experience complications from the flu and should contact their healthcare provider promptly if they develop flu symptoms. These groups include pregnant women, children younger than five years old, adults 65 and older, and people with chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease, asthma, and diabetes. Anyone who is very sick should go to the emergency room for treatment.

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