



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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Window closing on getting flu vaccination *Now is the time for kids to get second flu vaccination*

DENVER--As flu activity continues in Colorado, state Immunization Program director Dr. Rachel Herlihy Thursday reminded Coloradans who haven't been vaccinated to do so now if they want to be protected against the flu this year.

"The optimal time for getting a flu vaccination is coming to a close," said Herlihy, who is based at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. "Because the vaccination takes two weeks to be fully protective against flu, we are urging people to get their vaccination now."

Currently, Colorado has seen 63 hospitalizations in 13 counties due to flu. Typically, flu cases begin to mount after the holidays and peak in the late winter/early spring.

Herlihy said now is the time to get younger children a second dose of flu vaccine if they fall into the category of children needing two doses this season. Children ages 6 months through 8 years should receive two doses of influenza vaccine, at least four weeks apart, the first time they ever receive the vaccine. In addition, children who received only one dose the first year they were vaccinated should receive two doses the next flu season to allow their bodies to build full immunity.

"Many young children are vulnerable to the flu and flu complications when they don't receive a second dose of influenza vaccine," Herlihy said. Influenza's health impacts often are underestimated, and "influenza illness can be severe, even deadly," she said.

Although it's still too early to predict the overall severity of this flu season, flu cases continue to be reported across Colorado and nationally. "Influenza is circulating and will continue to circulate in Colorado and nationally for the next couple of months," said Herlihy.

In addition to urging Coloradans to get vaccinated, Herlihy encouraged them to practice good hygiene to prevent the spread of flu by frequently washing their hands, covering their cough and staying home when sick. To find a flu clinic, visit <http://www.immunizecolorado.com> or call 1-877-462-2911.

For more information on flu surveillance in Colorado, visit the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's influenza website at <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/Influenza/index.html>.

