



2010 Frequently Asked Questions about Flu

Why should I get a seasonal flu vaccination?

Flu viruses are always changing and it is impossible to predict accurately what flu strains will make people ill or the severity of illness they will cause. Flu is a contagious respiratory illness that may cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious complications from the flu. The best way to protect yourself and your family against influenza is to get vaccinated every year. In a typical flu season, between 5 to 20% of the U. S. population catches the flu, leading to an average of 225,000 hospitalizations and about 36,000 deaths each year. Matching flu vaccines to the expected illnesses or flu strains, is challenging. There is always a chance the actual flu virus will be different than the ones used to manufacture the vaccine. Even if you catch a different flu strain, the seasonal flu vaccine you receive can reduce your chance of getting the flu and/or the severity of your illness.

Who should be vaccinated?

The Center for Disease Control & Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ADIP) recommend universal influenza vaccination for all persons six months of age and older, as soon as possible.

How many doses of seasonal flu do I need this year?

Everyone, 9 years and older, will require only one vaccination to protect against three strains of the flu, including the H1N1 virus that sparked the 2009 pandemic. However, if you received your H1N1 vaccination last year, you will still need to take a seasonal flu shot this year. For those under 9 years, check with your clinician to see if your child requires one or two doses for the best protection against the flu.

Are vaccines safe?

Flu vaccines are safe with a long track record maintaining the highest standards of safety. This year's vaccine is made in the same way as in past flu vaccines.





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Shouldn't I wait until the end of October or into November before getting my flu vaccination?

The immunity response has proven to last the duration of the flu season so there is no reason to wait and no decrease in immunity response if you get your vaccination earlier. In the past, it has been suggested to wait until October or November to get your vaccination and this is no longer the recommendation. The CDC strongly recommends that all persons six months of age and older, get their seasonal flu vaccination as soon as possible. Yearly flu vaccination should begin in September, or as soon as vaccine is available, and continue throughout the flu season which can last as late as May.

Who is most at risk for contracting the flu?

While everyone is now recommended to receive a flu vaccination, high-risk patients, such as pregnant women, those 65 years and older, and those with asthma, diabetes, or other chronic conditions, remain especially vulnerable for serious complications from influenza.

What is the higher dose vaccine for those 65 years and older?

Because the immune system weakens with age, the CDC developed a higher dose vaccine for 65 years and older. SWDH will not offer this vaccine, but the CDC says either option will provide protection.

If I got the H1N1 vaccination last year, why do I need it again?

If you received your H1N1 vaccination last year, you will still need to take a seasonal flu shot this year. This year's seasonal flu vaccine contains three flu strains including H1N1. Your immunity levels decrease and you need a booster every year for increased protection against the flu.



Don't let the flu bug catch you!



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What are Southwest District Health costs for the flu vaccination?

Vaccination will cost \$26 for adults aged 19 years and older. Vaccine for children, six months of age through 18 years, is provided for a minimum administration fee, subject to vaccine supply availability. Check on the costs when you make your appointment.

Where can I get vaccinated?

Southwest District Health has flu vaccine in the clinics listed below, subject to vaccine supply availability. Call for an appointment today!

Caldwell	(208) 455-5345
Nampa	(208) 465-8400
Emmett	(208) 365-6371
Payette	(208) 642-9321
Weiser	(208) 549-2370

Is Flu Mist or Nasal Spray available?

When you call for your appointment ask if flu mist is in stock. You must be healthy and between the ages of 2 to 49 years to receive flu mist.

How can I protect my family and me from getting the flu?

The best way to protect yourself and your family against influenza is to get vaccinated every year. Flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. You should also wash your hands frequently, stay home if you are sick, cover your cough and sneeze, keep away from those people that appear sick, and properly dispose of tissues.

Remember . . .

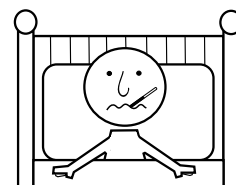
Wash Your Hands Frequently



Cover Your Cough & Sneeze



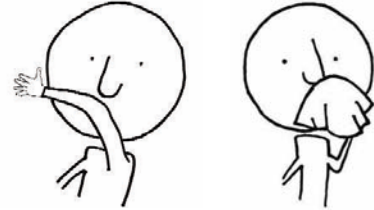
Stay Home When You Are Sick



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

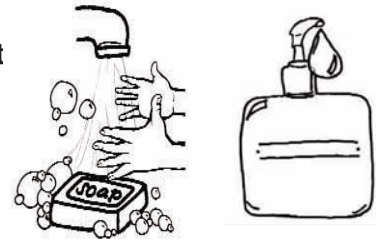
COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue
Put your used tissue in the trash immediately
If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze
into the inside of your elbow--not your hands



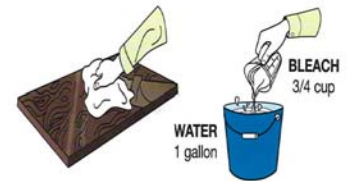
WASH YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for at least
20 seconds OR use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:
after coughing or sneezing
after caring for a sick person
after using the bathroom or changing a diaper
after handling garbage or animal waste
before you eat



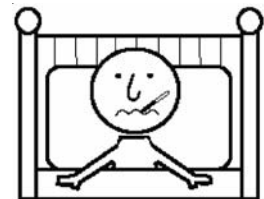
KEEP LIVING AND WORK AREAS CLEAN

Clean areas with household detergents such as
dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, and hand soap
Sanitize surfaces with bleach or alcohol



STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK

Stop the spread by staying home from work or school
and limit contact with others to keep from infecting
them. In turn, stay about six feet away from sick
people. During a pandemic you may also be asked to
avoid crowds, limit your travel, and work from home.



There are many common sense, non-medical steps you can take to
protect yourself, your loved ones, and people around you.

Following these procedures can significantly limit
the spread of viruses.



Stop Germs -- STAY Healthy!

