



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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NUMBER: 14-11
FOR RELEASE: Immediate

DATE: 12/31/14
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Flu activity is increasing, but it's not too late to vaccinate!

Stanislaus County – Influenza (flu) activity in California is increasing. During the holidays, the flu can easily be transmitted to family and friends. If you haven't been vaccinated, there is still time to lower your risk for getting and spreading the flu. Health officials urge everyone six months of age and older be immunized every year to protect them against flu, a serious illness which can lead to hospitalization or death. Check with your primary care provider or your local pharmacy for vaccine availability.

There are many different flu viruses, and the flu vaccine is designed to protect against the strains research shows will cause the most illness during the flu season. According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), while some of the viruses spreading this season are different from what is in the vaccine, vaccination can still provide protection and might reduce severe outcomes such as hospitalization and death.

"California is experiencing an early influenza season this year, but it's not too late to vaccinate!" says Dr. John Walker, Public Health Officer. Typically, the flu season peaks in February and March in Stanislaus County and the flu vaccine only takes two weeks to become effective. Vaccinations are also offered at the Stanislaus County Public Health Department at a low cost of \$10 per child (6 months through 18 years) and \$27 per adult. No person will be denied a flu vaccine for the inability to pay. Flu vaccines are provided to the public during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Public Health location at 820 Scenic Drive in Modesto. No appointments are necessary.

In addition to getting vaccinated, Public Health officials recommend everyone help prevent the spread of the seasonal flu by:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Carrying alcohol-based hand sanitizer with you and using when you are not able to wash your hands;
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth;
- Covering your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or tissue; and
- Staying home if you are sick.

"Antiviral treatment starting within 48 hours of onset is recommended for high risk groups such as children under one year of age and adults 65 years of age and over and others with chronic diseases. Check with your doctor." states Stanislaus County's Health Services Agency's Medical Director Dr. Del Morris.

These important messages and Public Health hygiene measures can help you protect yourself as well as your family and neighbors from becoming sick.

For more information about the influenza virus and the flu vaccines, please visit www.stanemergency.com or call the Health Services Agency Flu Hotline at (209) 558-8872.