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**Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update**

### **Health Department urges flu vaccine amid COVID outbreak**

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is urging everyone to get their flu vaccine as soon as possible to protect themselves and their communities from flu especially while continuing to battle COVID-19.

Getting a flu vaccine is critical this season because flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will likely be spreading simultaneously. Importantly, residents can get their COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as their flu vaccine. [According to the CDC](#), those who are at higher risk for contracting flu are also at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19. Vaccinations for both COVID-19 and the flu are safe, effective strategies to protect ourselves and our communities from illness.

"I encourage everyone to get their flu shot as soon as possible," said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director for the Health Department. "Everyone six months and older is recommended to receive the flu vaccination with few exceptions. A good guide to what parents need to know about the flu is available through [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)," he said, suggesting now is the time to get the flu shot. "And you can safely get the COVID-19 vaccination, or other needed immunizations, at the same time," Dr. Meyerson added.

Flu vaccines are available now at the health department, physician offices and pharmacies around the region and state. To find a health department clinic near you and to make an appointment for your flu shot, click [here](#). Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are appreciated and will save time in the clinic. Call 1-800-432-4121 to make an appointment for the flu vaccine or if you want to schedule both your flu and COVID-19 vaccinations.

The flu vaccine is the best way to reduce risk from the seasonal flu and its potential serious complications. Each year flu vaccination [reduces the burden of influenza](#) significantly in the United States preventing millions of illnesses and thousands of hospitalizations and deaths.

Last flu season, approximately 3.5 million people in Michigan received a flu vaccine as reported to the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR). The state has set a goal of vaccinating a total of 4 million Michiganders for the 2021-2022 flu season.

Last year's flu season was unique in many ways, resulting in historically low flu activity for the entire season. Public health professionals indicate that community mitigation measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic such as masking and social distancing and influenza vaccination could have contributed to the below average amount of influenza cases last season.

However, during a typical flu season like the 2019-2020 flu season, the nation recorded [39 to 56 million estimated cases of the flu](#), 18 to 26 million medical visits due to the flu and nearly half a million flu

*The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit [nwhealth.org](http://nwhealth.org).*

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hospitalizations. Despite its comparison to the common cold, the flu is a very serious and potentially deadly disease, especially for children, older people and people with chronic health conditions.

The health department offers convenient COVID-19 vaccination clinics for all area residents and visitors 12 and older by appointment ahead of time. Parent consent is required for minors. Anyone may call 800-432-4121 if they have questions or are not able to find a time or date that works for them and/or their child. Clinics offer client choice of Pfizer, Moderna or J&J unless otherwise noted. Upcoming COVID-19 clinics for appointments only include:

**Friday, October 29**

- 8:15-11:35 a.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 95 Livingston Blvd., Gaylord. To schedule an appointment:[Click Here](#)
- 8:15-11:35 a.m. and 1-4:30 p.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 3434 M-119, Harbor Springs. To schedule an appointment:[Click Here](#)

**Monday, November 1**

- 1-4:30 p.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 220 W. Garfield Ave., Charlevoix. To schedule an appointment:[Click Here](#)

**Wednesday, November 3**

- 1-4:30 p.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 95 Livingston Blvd., Gaylord. To schedule an appointment:[Click Here](#)

**Thursday, November 4**

- 1-4:30 p.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 205 Grove St., Mancelona. To schedule an appointment:[Click Here](#)

**Friday, November 5**

- 8:15-11:35 a.m. and 1-4:30 p.m. - Health Department of Northwest Michigan, 3434 M-119 Harbor Springs. To schedule an appointment:[Click Here](#)

The calendar on the website [www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org) lists COVID-19 clinics currently scheduled through November 30.

Stay up to date on the latest information in the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction by [liking and following our Facebook page](#) and visiting our [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). To locate a testing facility, visit the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder website](#). To track the risk levels of COVID-19 pandemic indicators, visit the [MI Safe Start Map website](#). For more information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, visit the MDHHS [vaccine website](#) or the [CDC vaccine website](#).