

Health and Welfare Alert



Ohio Administrative Code 5123:2-17-02 requires all developmental disabilities employees to review Health and Welfare Alerts released by the department as part of annual training. All previous alerts are listed on the department's website.

Preventing Flu, Pneumonia #31-11-17

Seasonal Influenza

Seasonal influenza, also known as the flu, is a viral illness that causes fever, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion and body aches. It is usually spread from person to person by coughing and sneezing.

Most people who get the flu usually recover in one to two weeks, but the flu can be deadly. An estimated 300,000 people are hospitalized with the flu each year in the U.S.

Flu vaccines are designed to protect against the influenza viruses that experts predict will be the most common during the upcoming season. Among adults, complications, hospitalizations, and deaths due to the flu are generally most common among those 65 years old and older.

Ohioans with developmental disabilities may be at high risk for the flu due to chronic lung conditions like asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis. Risk of aspiration may be increased secondary to difficulty swallowing, gastro esophageal reflux disease, tube feeding, seizure disorder, cerebral palsy, and suppressed or absent cough or sneeze reflex.



Prevention Tips

- Stay home when sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wash hands often
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth
- Get enough sleep
- Exercise and avoid stress
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid close contact with sick people

Fast Facts

859 Ohioans with developmental disabilities were hospitalized in 2016 due to pneumonia and influenza

16% of all unscheduled hospitalization MUIs for Ohioans with DD in 2016 were due to pneumonia and influenza

– DODD Incident Tracking System

54% of Ohioans did not protect themselves from the flu for the 2016-17 flu season

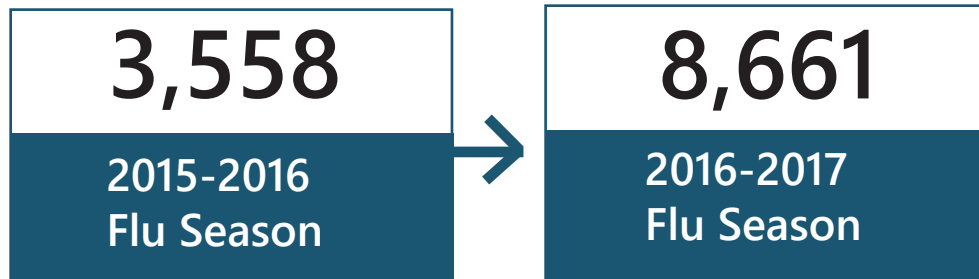
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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's vaccine experts are again this year recommending that everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine each year.

Flu vaccination should begin soon after vaccine becomes available, if possible by October. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating, vaccination should continue to be offered throughout the flu season, even in January or later.

There are some people who

Ohio's flu-related hospital stays have more than doubled since 2015



– Buckeye Health Plan

should not be vaccinated without first consulting a physician.

Children younger than 6

months are too young to get a flu shot, as well as people with severe, life-threatening allergies to the flu vaccine or any ingredient in the vaccine.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs that can cause mild to severe illness in people of all ages. Common signs of pneumonia can include cough, fever, and trouble breathing.

In the U.S., there are vaccines that help prevent infection by some of the bacteria and viruses that can cause pneumonia.

These vaccines include

- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- Influenza (flu)
- Measles

- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Pneumococcal
- Varicella (chickenpox)

When to Call 911

Some pneumonia symptoms warrant seeking immediate medical attention, including

- Chest pain, especially sharp pain under the ribs
- Abnormal heart rate (less than 40 beats per minute or higher than 140 bpm)
- Breathlessness
- Blueness to skin, lips, nails (not enough oxygen)

When to See a Doctor

Other symptoms indicate a person should talk to their physician, including

- Sudden coughing that produces discolored phlegm
- Shaking chills or a high fever (higher than 102.5F)
- Mental confusion
- Abdominal pain
- Worsening cough: a dry cough that becomes wet and produces phlegm
- Symptoms of an upper respiratory infection that do not resolve or steadily worsen