

2019 National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) Talking Points

- Influenza (flu) is a respiratory disease caused by a virus that affects the nose, throat and lungs. It is not the same as “stomach flu.”
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine **every year** unless they cannot because of medical reasons.
- Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu, so it’s important to get vaccinated. Healthy people can also help prevent the spread of flu to more vulnerable people by getting vaccinated.
- Now is a great time to get your flu vaccination! Since it takes two weeks for your body to respond to the vaccine, getting a vaccination now means you should reach your full immunity by the holidays.
- The only thing predictable about flu is that it’s unpredictable. We don’t know what the season will bring, but that’s why you should get vaccinated now so you are prepared.
- We still have a lot of flu season left. Flu season can go until April or May in Minnesota.
- The flu vaccine won’t prevent every case of flu, but an annual vaccination is the best way to reduce your risk of serious illness.
- It’s especially important to vaccinate those at highest risk for complications due to flu, including:
 - Pregnant women; people 65 and older; young children; those with asthma, diabetes or other chronic conditions; people who live in nursing homes; persons with obesity; Native Americans and Alaska Natives.
- Children, even those without an underlying health condition, are at high risk for complications of flu and they are more likely to get the flu than adults.
 - In the 2018-19 season, only about 64% of Minnesota children age 6 months through 17 years received a flu vaccine.
 - Don’t miss an opportunity to get your children and the rest of your family vaccinated—it’s not too late!
- The cost of vaccinations will vary at each site. Most health insurance plans cover flu vaccines; make sure you bring your insurance card with you. Contact your insurance plan if you are unsure of the cost to you.
 - If you’re concerned about cost, there are clinics that offer free or low-cost vaccines. Go to [Where to Get Vaccinated](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/vaxfinder.html) (www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/vaxfinder.html).
- For more information, call your health care provider or visit www.mdhflu.com.

Immunization Program
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651-201-5503 or 1-800-657-3970
www.mdhflu.com

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414.