

Flu vaccination encouraged as COVID-19 pandemic continues

SPRINGFIELD, Ore. — With COVID-19 still in the community and flu season on its way, PeaceHealth is urging the public take measures to protect themselves and others from the flu.

This fall and winter, the flu virus is likely to be spreading along with the virus that causes COVID-19, and it is possible to contract both at the

same time, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Both are respiratory illnesses with similar symptoms, like fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, congestion, body aches, chills and fatigue.

“Getting vaccinated is the surest way to prevent contracting the flu and spreading it to others,” said

Dr. Bob Pelz, PeaceHealth’s medical director for infection prevention. “I get the flu shot every year because I have a responsibility to do everything I can to protect my patients, coworkers, friends and family as much as I can. It’s a quick, safe and easy way for me to do my part.”

Who should be vaccinated and when?

Flu season typically begins in November or December and can ramp up quickly. The CDC recommends getting the flu shot before the end of October – although it’s never too late while the disease is still present in the community.

It usually takes about two weeks after a shot for the vaccine to start working.

The vaccination is safe and effective for nearly everyone, and groups who are particularly vulnerable should make flu shots a priority.

These include:

- Anyone 65 and older
- Children younger than 5
- Pregnant women
- People with certain medical conditions

With the return of in-person school and other community activities, it’s especially important that children receive their flu vaccine this year.

“Every year, some children get the flu and they can become very ill,” said Dr. Serena Black, a pediatric hospitalist at Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend and PeaceHealth’s director of children’s medical services.

“This fall, pediatricians around the country are also concerned about the potential for patients to experience more severe illness if they get sick with a combination of flu and COVID-19,” she said. “Infected children also can pass the flu on to grandparents or others who are at high risk of complications if they get sick. We

encourage parents to bring their kids in for their flu vaccination as soon as possible.”

People who are allergic to eggs and those who have had Guillain-Barré syndrome, an illness of the central nervous system, should make sure to consult with their provider before getting a flu shot.

The flu vaccine is never a 100 percent guarantee one won’t get sick, but it can significantly lower chances of becoming ill. And even if one does get the flu, they will likely experience milder symptoms if they’ve been vaccinated.

Where can I get a flu shot?

Pediatrics: PeaceHealth Pediatrics has vaccine available and has set aside times specifically for flu vaccinations at the RiverBend Pavilion clinic in Springfield and the University District and Barger clinics in Eugene. Please call your pediatrician’s office to schedule an appointment

A clinic for pediatric patients in the Cottage Grove area will be held on Saturday, Nov. 6, from noon to 3 p.m. at PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center.

Visit www.peacehealth.org/pediatric-flu-shot-clinics for the dates and times of all the pediatric vaccination clinics.

Adults: All of PeaceHealth’s family medicine clinics have the flu vaccine, and many are scheduling days and times for flu shot clinics. Please schedule using MyPeaceHealth, or call ahead to the clinic of your choice. PeaceHealth’s urgent care clinics and the Woodfield Station same-day clinic also are convenient options.

Cottage Grove-area residents may get their flu shot at drive-up clinics at Cottage Grove Community Medical Center Saturday Nov. 6, from noon to 3 p.m. No appointment is needed for drive-up clinics.

For more details about all of PeaceHealth’s flu vaccination clinics, please visit www.peacehealth.org/flushot.

The same precautions effective against COVID-19 should also help prevent the spread of flu. They include washing hands frequently, wearing face coverings in public, covering coughs, limiting the size and frequency of social gatherings and staying home when feeling sick.



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