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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**People Urged to Get Vaccinated as Idaho's First Influenza Case is Reported**

Idaho's first confirmed case of seasonal influenza has been reported, prompting health officials to urge people to get vaccinated. Every year the flu contributes to the deaths of 36,000 people in the United States, causing over 200,000 hospitalizations.

The first cases of influenza often show up in October, with the flu season frequently lasting until May. Idaho's first case was reported from southeast Idaho. Flu seasons are unpredictable, so health officials are urging people to get vaccinated sooner, rather than later. A record 130 million doses of flu vaccine is expected to be available this year, which should be enough for every person who wants to receive the vaccine. People who are advised to get the vaccine include:

- Children who are six months to five years old;
- Pregnant women or women planning to become pregnant during the influenza season;
- People over the age of 50;
- Children and adolescents (6 months to 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye syndrome after influenza virus infection;
- People with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease, respiratory illnesses or those with compromised immune systems;
- People living in care facilities;
- Healthcare workers; and
- Family members who live with or care for persons at high risk for influenza-related complications such as infants younger than six months old or a family member who has a chronic illness.

Along with a plentiful supply of vaccine, there also is a nasal vaccine that has been approved for children as young as two years of age. The nasal spray vaccine is approved for people two to 49 years of age.

**(more)**

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that infects 5-20% of people every year. Symptoms include fever, headache and fatigue. Complications of the flu can lead to more serious illnesses, including death. The influenza virus usually spreads person-to-person through coughing and sneezing. The best protection for people from becoming infected is to receive an annual flu shot. People also are urged to:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent infecting other people. Avoid people who appear sick.
- Stay home from work when sick,
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after being out in the public. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth until you have washed your hands.
- Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of liquids, eat nutritious foods and take part in physical activity to stay healthy.

Your healthcare provider or your local public health districts are good sources for receiving your flu vaccine. Local flu clinics also are available at retail establishments and community centers. People can find times and locations for flu shot clinics in their areas through the web by going to [www.findaflushot.com](http://www.findaflushot.com). For information about influenza and how to stay healthy, please visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)

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(Editors: For more information please contact your local public health district or IDHW Public Information Officer Tom Shanahan at 208-334-0668.).