



For Immediate Release

For More Information Contact:
Kurt Koopmann
Public Information Officer
Galveston County Health District
(409) 938-2211
(409) 392-0007
kkoopman@gchd.org

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It is not too late to get a flu shot

Galveston County and Cities – With the influenza virus having been confirmed to be circulating in the Houston area, officials with the Galveston County Health District are reminding people that the best way to prevent illness is by receiving a flu shot. Health Authority Dr. Mark Guidry says, "It is not too late to get a flu vaccination which is one of the best ways to protect against getting and spreading the flu."

The peak of flu season in Texas usually is in January and February. It takes about two weeks for the vaccine to become effective. There have been 3 confirmed cases of influenza reported to the Galveston County Health District as well as other reports of flu-like illness from local medical providers. Health Officials expect more reported cases until the end of the flu season in early March.

In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting the flu can get vaccinated. However, it is recommended that certain people should get vaccinated each year. Most of these people are recommended for vaccination because they are at high risk of having serious flu complications or they live with or care for people at high risk for serious complications.

People recommended for vaccination during this year's flu season are: children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday; pregnant women; people 50 years of

age and older; people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions; people who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities; people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including health care workers, household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu, household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age.

Flu shots area also available in the District's immunization clinics in Texas City, Dickinson and Galveston. For more information about Galveston County Health District immunization clinics and vaccine supply contact Immunization Nurse Manager, June Gonzales at (409) 938-2244 or see usual clinic times at www.gchd.org/chn/IMM.htm.

Dr. Guidry points out that while the single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year, there are some other things a person can do to help prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu such as:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Practice other good health habits like getting plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

Flu is not a reportable condition in Texas, but Galveston County health officials and the state rely on reports from a surveillance network to classify flu activity. For more information about influenza and the flu vaccine visit the CDC website at: www.cdc.gov/flu/