

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Flu Season is Here

GTCHD Urges Residents to Get Vaccinated

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) reminds residents that flu season is here, and now is the time to protect yourself and your loved ones by getting a flu shot. Flu vaccines are now available at GTCHD by appointment.

2025 Flu Vaccination Recommendations

GTCHD recommends that:

- **Everyone aged 6 months and older** without contraindications receives a flu vaccine.
- **High-risk individuals** should get vaccinated as soon as possible.
- Vaccination protects against the risk of contracting severe flu-like symptoms and disease

High-risk groups include:

- Adults 65 years and older
- Children younger than 5, especially under age 2
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic health conditions such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, cancer, or neurologic conditions

“Flu can be serious, especially for those at higher risk like seniors, young children, and people with underlying health conditions,” said Jacalyn Money-Bruno, RN, GTCHD Community Health Director. “The vaccine is a safe and easy way to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community.”

Most healthcare insurance plans cover the annual flu shot as preventive care. Flu vaccination is often available at no or low cost to people who do not have insurance.

Influenza Facts

- Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Illness can range from mild to severe, and in some cases, lead to hospitalization or death.
- During the 2024 flu season, the CDC estimated:
 - **47–82 million flu illnesses**
 - **610,000–1.3 million hospitalizations**
 - **27,000–130,000 deaths**
- Flu spreads through respiratory droplets when people cough, sneeze, or talk, as well as by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the mouth or nose. People can spread the flu up to a day before symptoms begin and for 5–7 days after becoming sick.

Flu Symptoms

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children)

The flu vaccine not only decreases your chances of getting the flu, but it can also decrease the risk of complications, shorten the duration of illness, and decrease symptoms if you do get the flu. This means less chance of hospitalization and less days of missed work and school.

The GTCHD offers appointments for flu vaccine for everyone six months and older, as well as high-dose vaccine for seniors. For questions or to schedule an appointment, call 231-995-6131. To learn more information on immunizations, please visit our website www.gtcountymi.gov/530/immunizations.

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