



# DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NO. 2

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Date: September 14, 2020

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### Importance of the Flu Vaccination during the COVID-19 Pandemic

As flu season quickly approaches, District Health Department No. 2 (DHD2) would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of receiving a flu vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that the virus that causes COVID-19 and flu viruses will be circulating at the same time during the upcoming flu season. With that said, flu vaccination will be ever so important in decreasing the overall impact of respiratory illness by reducing flu associated illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths, consequently reducing the burden on the health care system and preserving resources for care of COVID-19 patients.

According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), data shows that those individuals who are at higher risk of flu infection or flu complications are also those that are at an increased risk of COVID-19 infection. Flu vaccinations reduce the burden of flu on our communities and the health care system. MDHHS also shares the following benefits of the flu vaccine:

- Flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization, and death by about half.
- If you get a flu vaccine, you are less likely to get flu and to need to go to a doctor's office, urgent care, or emergency room. You are also less likely to be hospitalized or die from flu.
- Flu vaccination is also an important preventative tool for people with chronic health conditions.
- Flu vaccination can protect you from needing medical attention and possibly being exposed to something contagious, like the virus that causes COVID-19.

In addition, getting the flu vaccine helps to protect frontline healthcare workers who will likely be needed to care for people sick with respiratory illnesses this fall and winter.

While flu and COVID-19 have some similarities, there are some differences as well. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in terms of symptoms, common ones for both flu and COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, muscle pain, headaches, and in some cases diarrhea. However, other COVID-19 symptoms may include a change in or the loss of taste or smell. After being exposed to COVID-19, symptoms typically appear after 5 days

of being infected, but can appear as early as 2 days or as late as 14 days. Flu symptoms typically appear 1 to 4 days after being infected. Both flu and COVID-19 can spread from person to person, typically by droplets when people are in close contact with one another. COVID-19 however has shown to be more contagious in certain populations and age groups than flu and have more superspreading events.

Dr. Mark Hamed, Medical Director for DHD2 states “There has never been a more important time in our history to get a flu shot as it is today. With COVID-19 raging around us with no vaccine available yet or known cure, we must prevent the flu as best as possible to help us get through what can be the most challenging flu season our country has experienced in our lifetime. If you held off on getting a flu shot before, please get one as soon as it’s available this year. We can’t afford to have the flu attacking us in addition to COVID-19”.

Individuals should receive their flu vaccination before flu activity begins in their community. Ideally, September and October are good months to be vaccinated in however, vaccinations given in December or later are still beneficial, even if flu activity in the community has already begun.

To schedule an appointment, call DHD2 at 1-800-504-2650. For more information on COVID-19, visit DHD2’s website at [www.dhd2.org/COVID-19](http://www.dhd2.org/COVID-19) or the State of Michigan’s website at [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus).