



Erie County  
Department of  
Health



Public Health  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## MEDIA RELEASE

October 8, 2020

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### WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GET A FLU VACCINE, NOW.

*Erie County Department of Health recommends flu vaccination  
to reduce influenza cases this winter*

ERIE COUNTY, NY – There is no more direct way to say it: the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) is urging every county resident age six months and older to get a flu vaccine this fall.

“If there was ever a year to get a flu vaccine, 2020 is it,” **said County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz.** “Seasonal flu is a serious threat to your personal health and to public health, and we recommend to the people of Erie County in the strongest possible terms that they get a flu vaccine, and get it soon.”

As in past years, Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz and Commissioner of Health Dr. Gale Burstein lined up for a flu vaccination at a Wegmans clinic for Erie County employees on Thursday.

“Having the flu might make you feel miserable for a few days or a few weeks,” **said Dr. Burstein.** “The flu can also cause devastating health complications for people in certain high-risk groups, including children under 2 years old, adults over 65 years old, people with chronic heart, lung, kidney and metabolic conditions, and females who are pregnant or who may become pregnant during flu season.” People can get infected with COVID-19 and flu at the same time. Although there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19, today there are vaccines to protect against flu.

Caregivers and those who spend time with people at high risk for flu complications need to make getting a flu vaccine a priority. The flu vaccine is an additional layer of protection for our community’s most vulnerable. That would include people who care for family members at home, and caregivers who work in child care settings, group homes and other congregate living sites, and healthcare facilities.

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“Myths and misinformation about the flu vaccine can be countered with this undeniable fact: flu vaccine can keep you from getting the flu,” **said Dr. Burstein.** “We are facing a flu season alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, and a flu vaccine is a quick, one-time action that will have a protective benefit for months.”

### **Groups at risk for flu complications and hospitalization**

- Adults 65 years and older
- Children younger than 2 years old
- People with chronic medical conditions like
  - Asthma
  - Neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions
  - Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)
  - Chronic lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD] and cystic fibrosis)
  - Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus)
  - Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)
  - Kidney diseases
  - Liver disorders
  - Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
- People who are obese with a body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher
- People with a weakened immune system due to disease (such as people with HIV or AIDS, or some cancers such as leukemia) or medications (such as those receiving chemotherapy or radiation treatment for cancer, or persons with chronic conditions requiring chronic corticosteroids or other drugs that suppress the immune system)
- People who have had a stroke
- Females who are pregnant and up to 2 weeks after the end of pregnancy
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

### **Who should get a flu vaccine?**

Everyone ages 6 months and older. There are very few medical reasons for someone to avoid getting a flu vaccination. If you have questions, please check with your physician or pharmacist.

### **When should I get a flu vaccine?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend a flu vaccination before the end of October. And a flu vaccine received any time through the end of the 2020-2021 flu season will have a protective benefit. Don't delay. The best protection comes before the flu season starts in early winter, and it takes up to two weeks to develop antibodies. Children who need two doses of flu vaccine should start the process sooner; two doses must be spaced four weeks apart.

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**Where can I get a flu vaccine?**

Nearly all pharmacies and many doctor's offices offer flu vaccine. Visit [vaccinefinder.org](http://vaccinefinder.org) to search for locations in your neighborhood. ECDOH recommends calling ahead to confirm vaccine availability.

**Is there a cost for flu vaccine?**

With most insurance plans, a flu vaccine is covered completely and there is no co-pay. Some pharmacies offer flu vaccine for a nominal fee.

**Other information**

Wegmans has planned two drive-thru flu clinics for 10/10/2020 at the Niagara Falls Boulevard store in Amherst, and another on 10/17/2020 at the Amherst Street store in Buffalo. Each clinic runs from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., and attendees are asked to wear a mask and bring their health insurance card.

Any organization in Erie County that is scheduling a flu clinic that is open to the public can share that information with ECDOH and we will promote on our social media channels.

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For more information:

- Erie County Department of Health, Influenza: [www.erie.gov/flu](http://www.erie.gov/flu)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Influenza (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)
- CDC, [GetMyFluShot.org](http://GetMyFluShot.org)

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