



St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS FLU VACCINATIONS TO ST. MARY'S COUNTY RESIDENTS

LEONARDTOWN, MD (January 3, 2013) – The flu season in the United States is off to its earliest start in a decade, and the St. Mary's County Health Department would like to remind citizens to get vaccinated as soon as possible. According to officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the early nature of the cases and the predominant type of flu in circulation this year could create a severe flu season.

Flu cases have been reported in 29 states, including Maryland. Influenza often peaks in January, February or even later. Fortunately, the vaccine formulated for this year is well-matched to the strains of virus seen so far, and officials are urging those who have not been vaccinated to get a flu shot. Flu vaccines are designed to protect against three influenza viruses that experts predict will be the most common during the upcoming flu season.

Influenza immunizations are recommended for everyone over the age of six months. It is especially important for individuals who are at high risk for complications, including;

- Children six months to 18 years of age;
- Persons 50 years of age and older;

(more)

- Pregnant women;
- Persons with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, heart, lung or kidney disease; and
- Persons undergoing therapy or with a condition that may weaken their immune system.

Persons who care for someone in these groups should be sure to get vaccinated to avoid spreading the flu to them. This includes healthcare workers, caregivers, and daycare and school workers. More information on influenza vaccination is available on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>

Immunizations are typically offered in primary care doctors' offices. The St. Mary's County Health Department also offers flu vaccinations, by appointment only, for a fee of \$20. Please call 301-475-4324 to schedule an appointment.

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