



## You Have the Power to Fight Flu

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### Flu season is upon us; get a flu vaccine now

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#### **You Have the Power to Fight Flu**

Flu season is upon us; get a flu vaccine now

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash.** – October brings fall, changing leaves and pumpkins—and the beginning of flu season. Last year, Snohomish County saw record numbers of influenza-related school absenteeism, hospitalizations and deaths. Additionally, hospital and EMS systems were strained by the increased demand of patients seeking immediate care.

Now is the best time to get your flu shot. The flu vaccine can reduce influenza illness, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to the flu. It can also prevent flu-related hospitalizations. It's important to note that the flu vaccine does not cause flu illnesses. The viruses in the flu shot are inactivated (i.e., killed) which means they cannot cause infection.

The Snohomish Health District has developed new resources for the community at [www.snohd.org/flu](http://www.snohd.org/flu). Highlights of the information include:

- [Weekly influenza surveillance reports](#) (typically updated weekly on Friday afternoons)
- Information on flu symptoms and treatment options
- [Guidelines on when to remain home](#), and when to seek medical or emergency care
- Status of medical providers who may be offering extended clinic hours to help reduce the demand on hospitals
- [Flu vaccine information](#)

Children ages 6 months through 18 years can receive a seasonal flu vaccine at no cost through the Vaccines for Children program, although healthcare providers may charge an administration fee. Children younger than 6 months are at higher risk of serious flu complications, but are too young to get a flu vaccine. If you live with or care for an infant younger than 6 months of age, you should get a flu vaccine to help protect them from flu. Also, studies have shown that getting the flu vaccine during pregnancy can protect the baby after birth for several months.

If you are 65 years or older, two vaccine formulations are available that provide extra protection for those with aging immune systems. An annual flu vaccine, including the new

formulations, is covered by Medicare, Part B. Talk with your healthcare provider to see which vaccine is best for you. For more information and resources, including the Flu Vaccine Finder widget, visit [www.snohd.org/flu](http://www.snohd.org/flu).

In addition to getting vaccinated, residents are encouraged to follow three simple rules: wash hands, cover coughs, and stay home if sick. Those with fevers and cough should stay at home until they have been fever free (a temp less than 100.4 F) at least 24 hours without taking Tylenol or Ibuprofen before returning to work, school or daycare.

To prevent health care resources being strained, emergency care is typically only needed for the following warning signs:

- Confusion or can't be woken up
- Difficulty breathing
- Pain or pressure in chest or abdomen
- Blue lips or skin rash
- Unable to drink or keep liquids down
- Fever in an infant under 3 months old
- Excessive irritability (for children)

If you do not have one of the warning signs, please call your provider to see if you can make an in-person or virtual appointment, or consider a walk-in or urgent care clinic.

The [CDC recommends](#) that people who are at high risk for serious flu complications who get flu symptoms during flu season be treated with influenza antiviral drugs as quickly as possible. People who are not at high risk for serious flu complications may also be treated with influenza antiviral drugs, especially if treatment can begin within 48 hours.

The Snohomish Health District works for a safer and healthier community through disease prevention, health promotion, and protection from environmental threats. To read more about the District and for important health information, visit [www.snohd.org](http://www.snohd.org).

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