



NEWS RELEASE

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FLU SHOT SHORTAGE

Knox County Offers Update of Flu Vaccine Shortage and Flu Prevention Recommendations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is continuing to work with the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) to combat the statewide flu vaccine shortage. TDH has indicated that they will redistribute their available flu vaccine throughout the state to the regions that will be most affected by the vaccine shortages, including Knox County.

"Overcoming the flu vaccine shortage will be a challenge," stated Knox County Health Department Director, Mark Jones. "If we work together in the medical community and closely follow the guidelines set by CDC, we will be able to protect those members of the community who need it most."

Currently, the Knox County Health Department has no flu vaccine. A limited supply of vaccine will be received from TDH; however, we do not know at this time when the vaccine will become available. After the vaccine is received in Knox County, it will be used by KCHD to vaccinate only those persons in priority groups as indicated by CDC (see attached list of priority groups for vaccination at KCHD).

KCHD had previously scheduled several High-Risk Flu Shot Clinics that were to be held during the last two weeks of October. Those special clinics have been cancelled as a result of the shortages. When flu vaccine is available, KCHD will begin vaccinating people who fall into priority groups.

KCHD will offer more information as it becomes available regarding when vaccines will be on hand.

In the meantime, KCHD offers the following recommendations:

- High-risk persons seek vaccine from their local primary care provider or other local resources (such as pharmacies).
- Local medical providers, pharmacies, and hospitals strictly adhere to CDC guidelines and vaccinate only high-risk persons.
- Persons who are not in the CDC priority groups should forego their vaccination and follow the stringent flu etiquette habits listed below.

All persons, especially those who do not receive the vaccine, maintain stringent flu etiquette habits, which can dramatically reduce one's chances of getting the flu.

- **WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY!!!**
- **Cover your mouth and nose when you cough.** It can protect those around you.
- **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and keep your distance from people when you are sick.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** Staying home from work, school, or errands when you are sick can help prevent the spread of illness.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Knox County Health Department Priority Groups for Flu Vaccination

People falling into the following groups are considered high-risk and will be able to receive the flu vaccine at KCHD after it becomes available.

- i. Children aged 6 – 23 months,
- ii. Adults aged 65 years and older,
- iii. Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- iv. Persons aged 2–64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions;