



# Clinton County Health Department

133 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, New York 12901-2926

**"Working Together for a Healthier Community"**

[www.clintonhealth.org](http://www.clintonhealth.org)



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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## News Release

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For Immediate Release  
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### 2018-2019 U.S. Flu Season is Here

**Plattsburgh, October 22, 2018.** The flu, which usually begins to appear in the U.S. in October, arrived early this year just as it did in 2017. The first case in Clinton County was reported last week. According to Darwyna Facteau, Director of Health Care Services at the Clinton County Health Department, "Last year was rated as a *high severity* flu season. Influenza or flu showed up early and lasted well into the spring causing significant illness, hospitalizations and deaths.

The U.S. 2018/2019 season officially started on September 30th. During the first week, a child in Florida died from flu. The child, who had no underlying medical conditions, was unvaccinated. For Ms. Facteau, this highlights the importance of making sure that children are vaccinated. "In 2017/2018, the number of children receiving flu vaccine was down, and the U.S. saw a high number of pediatric deaths. In fact, the number of children who died from flu last year was higher than any year other year except 2009 during the H1N1 (swine) flu pandemic." Ms. Facteau noted that "some children may not have been vaccinated because the flu mist was not recommended last season." The mist offered a non-shot option. This year the mist is back. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) American Academy of Immunization Practices (ACIP) has again approved the nasal mist after some changes were made to increase effectiveness.

For the 2018-2019 flu season, ACIP recommends an annual influenza vaccination for everyone 6 months and older. "There are several forms of the vaccine available. Their use is based on a person's age and medical history, so it's important to speak with your doctor or pharmacist about which is best for you," stated Ms. Facteau. She recommends getting the vaccine now rather than waiting. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for your body to develop the antibodies needed to fight the flu virus. "Vaccinating now will prepare you for the upcoming holiday season when people travel, visit and spend time together," she noted.

Ms. Facteau also addressed one of the most common misconceptions about the flu vaccine, "The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu." Flu viruses in most vaccines have been 'inactivated' (killed) and are not infectious. Other vaccines use a single gene from a flu virus (as opposed to the full virus). This also does not cause infection. Sometimes mild reactions to flu vaccination occur such as soreness or redness where the shot was given, a low-grade fever, headache and muscle aches. These are signs that your body is making the antibodies needed to help fight the real virus.

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"Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations"

Vaccine effectiveness can vary year to year. The protection provided by a flu vaccine depends on the age and health status of the person getting the vaccine, as well as, how closely the vaccine matches the flu viruses in circulation. Researchers predict which strains of the virus are most likely to occur each year and they develop a vaccine to match. Some years the match is better than others. “We know that flu vaccine is not perfect, but it is the best way to protect against flu infection, hospitalizations and death,” advises, Ms. Facticeau. “Even an imperfect match provides important protection.”

The current flu season has historical significance. In 1918, the Spanish Influenza Pandemic killed approximately 50 million people worldwide. “One hundred years later we have so much more in our arsenal to fight the flu, starting with vaccine,” stated Ms. Facticeau

Good health habits can also help you avoid the flu and other illnesses. Those habits include avoiding people who are sick, staying home when you are ill, covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and cleaning your hands often using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

For more information about staying healthy this flu season visit [www.clintonhealth.org/flu](http://www.clintonhealth.org/flu)

**About the Clinton County Health Department:**

**The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at [www.clintonhealth.org](http://www.clintonhealth.org) or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).**

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