



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services

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For Immediate Release  
February 3, 2016

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## After a Slow Start, Flu Cases Are Increasing in Wisconsin

*Health officials say it's not too late to get a flu vaccine*

Madison—The [influenza](#) season got off to a slow start in Wisconsin in 2015, but officials with the Department of Health Services (DHS) have noticed an increase in cases in the first weeks of 2016, and want to remind state residents that it's not too late to get a flu vaccine and take other actions to avoid illness.

“We suspect with the late start of the season some people may have delayed getting vaccinated against the flu, but with cases on the rise, it's very important to get vaccinated now,” said State Health Officer Karen McKeown. “This is important for everyone, including young and middle-aged adults, since health officials nationwide are reporting severe respiratory illnesses and even deaths among this age group.”

The flu vaccine is safe and effective for everyone 6 months old and older, and is especially important for people who are 65 years old and older, young children, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

Health officials also encourage people who feel they may be getting the flu to contact their health care provider regarding the need for an anti-viral medication. Anti-viral medication is most effective if taken within 48 hours of the first signs of symptoms.

In addition to the vaccine, here are some steps we can all take to avoid illness:

- Wash your [hands](#) often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your upper sleeve, and try to avoid touching your face with your hand. If you use a tissue, throw it away after one use.
- Use your own drinking cups and straws.
- Avoid being exposed to people who are sick with flu-like symptoms.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest, and do not smoke.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, refrigerator handle, telephone, faucets).
- If you're sick, stay home, get rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco.

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