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Flu Mist Option Not Recommended for 2016-17 Influenza Season

State residents strongly encouraged to protect themselves with a flu shot before the season arrives

The Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) recently announced that the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), best known as nasal spray, or by the trade name Flu Mist, should not be used during the 2016-17 influenza season. The CDC's [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(link is external\)](#) voted to recommend it not be used after data showed poor or relatively low effectiveness of the nasal spray from 2013 through 2016.

“While it is disappointing to see data suggesting that the nasal spray vaccine is not working as well as expected, we are pleased that flu shots did perform well last season,” said State Health Officer Karen McKeown. “We expect that there will be enough of the injectable vaccine available for the 2016-17 season so everyone 6 months and older can protect themselves and their loved ones against the flu.”

How well the flu vaccine works can range widely from season to season and can be affected by a number of factors, including the similarity between vaccine viruses and circulating viruses. The CDC conducts vaccine effectiveness studies each season to gauge the success of a vaccine in preventing the flu virus. Data on the effectiveness of the nasal spray among children ages 2-17 during the 2015-16 season found that no effective benefit from the LAIV could be measured. By comparison, data found the injectable vaccine to be very effective in preventing flu among children in this age group.

This change in recommendation underscores the importance of ongoing efforts to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of vaccines to ensure the public is optimally protected from health threats. During the 2015-16 flu season in Wisconsin, there were approximately 1800 hospitalizations of people with influenza. Although the start and end date of a flu season can vary, the 2015-16 season peaked in March of 2016.

Influenza vaccine recommendations for the 2016-17 flu season will be published by the CDC in late summer or early this fall.

For any additional questions, please contact Community Health at 715.478.4355 or visit our website at cmh/fcpotawatomi.com