

## MEDIA RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### LINK TO MEDIA RELEASE

## **Orange County Health Department Urges the Community to Make a Plan to Get a Flu Shot**

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. October 12, 2020 — The Orange County Health Department is urging community members to protect themselves, their families and those around them by getting vaccinated against [Influenza](#) as the county enters flu season amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death,” according to Orange County Health Director, Quintana Stewart. “Flu vaccines are safe and effective. A flu shot provides protection against contracting the virus and, if you do catch the flu after being vaccinated, it has been shown to dramatically lessen the severity and duration of the illness.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommends vaccination](#) against the flu for everyone 6 months and older with any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine. Vaccination against the flu can make illness milder and reduce the risk of more serious outcomes, making it especially important for those at higher risk of complications, such as people over 65, children younger than 5, pregnant women and those with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease or obesity. Some of those same groups are also at high risk of complications from COVID-19.

“This flu season, it is more important than ever to get vaccinated against the flu. We will have both the flu and COVID-19 widely circulating this fall and winter, and we are learning that people can get both infections at the same time,” said State Health Director Dr. Elizabeth Cuervo Tilson. “We want people to protect themselves from the flu and also avoid overwhelming our hospitals so people can get care if they need it.”

Flu vaccinations are available at hospitals, pharmacies, private medical offices, some federally qualified health care centers and local health departments. Visit [vaccinefinder.org/find-vaccine](https://vaccinefinder.org/find-vaccine) to find locations.

The Orange County Health Department will be offering free flu vaccinations at two upcoming [COVID-19 testing events](#). They are:

- Saturday, October 17, 2020 at Lattisville Grove Missionary Baptist Church from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at 101 Jimmy Ed Road E, Hurdle Mills, NC 27541
- Saturday, October 24, 2020 at St. Thomas More Catholic Church from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 940 Carmichael St., Chapel Hill, NC 27514

In North Carolina, flu infections are most common from late fall to early spring with activity usually peaking in January or February. The following precautions should be taken to protect against the spread of flu and other viruses like [COVID-19](#):

- Stay home when sick until fever-free for at least 24 hours, except for COVID-19. Follow CDC guidance for [end of isolation](#) for COVID-19.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then discard the tissue promptly.
- Continue to [practice the 3Ws](#) — wearing a face covering over your nose and mouth, waiting 6 feet apart, and washing your hands often can help slow the spread of COVID-19 and flu.

COVID-19 and flu symptoms are similar, so individuals who feel ill should call ahead before going to a doctor's office, local health department or urgent care. They should consult with a doctor about getting tested for flu and/or COVID-19. Flu symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough and/or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches and/or body aches
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea (most common in children)

Anyone who thinks they have the flu should contact their doctor right away to see if they need treatment with a prescription antiviral drug, such as Tamiflu. Early treatment with an antiviral drug can help prevent flu infections from becoming more serious. Treatment with a prescription antiviral drug is especially important for hospitalized patients, people with severe flu illness and those who are at high risk of serious flu complications based on their age or health.

More information about flu is available online through the [Division of Public Health](#), the CDC at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu), and from the [Orange County Health Department](#). For information about COVID-19 in North Carolina, visit [covid19.ncdhhs.gov](http://covid19.ncdhhs.gov). The

Weekly updates on flu surveillance data are posted online at [flu.ncdhhs.gov](http://flu.ncdhhs.gov). The flu report will be posted every Thursday beginning Oct. 8 throughout the flu season with updated data from around the state on flu activity and other viral respiratory illnesses.

### **Help Spread the Word**

Community members may spread the word about the importance of making a plan to get a flu shot by using the CDC's Social Media Toolkit, which is available in many languages:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/toolkit/index.htm>

## Reliable Information

For the latest information and guidance relating to Orange County's COVID-19 response:

- Visit [www.orangecountync.gov/coronavirus](http://www.orangecountync.gov/coronavirus).
- Receive daily text updates on the crisis by texting 888-777 with OCNCHEALTH for English speakers and OCNCSALUD for Spanish speakers.
- Sign up for a weekly e-newsletter about the COVID-19 response via the [county website](#).
- Follow the Orange County Health Department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services updates its [COVID-19 case count dashboard](#) daily at 12 p.m.
- To ask questions about the pandemic or social service needs, contact Orange County at 919-245-6111 or [covid19@orangecountync.gov](mailto:covid19@orangecountync.gov). The phone line and emails are monitored during business hours Monday-Friday.

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