

DPHHS HAN ADVISORY



Cover Sheet

DATE: October 2, 2012

SUBJECT: State Confirms Influenza Cases,
Recommends Vaccine

INSTRUCTIONS:

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For LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT reference only

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact:

**DPHHS CDCP
Epidemiology Section
1-406-444-0273**

**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:
1-800-701-5769**

**DPHHS HAN Website:
www.han.mt.gov**

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Categories of Health Alert Messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919

State of Montana *Health Alert Network*

DPHHS HAN

Information Sheet

Date: October 2, 2012



Subject: State Confirms Influenza Cases, Recommends Vaccine

Information: DPHHS is distributing a media release regarding the confirmation of influenza cases and recommending vaccination.

NEWS

*"Improving and Protecting the
Health, Well-Being and Self-
Reliance of All Montanans."*



*Department of Public Health and Human Services
www.dphhs.mt.gov*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2012

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State confirms influenza cases, recommends vaccine

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has confirmed Montana's first influenza cases of this season.

As of October 2, 2012 a total of four cases have been confirmed in Park and Yellowstone counties. The individuals are two teens and two adults.

This is earlier than in 2011 and 2010 when the first cases were not confirmed until late November.

State and local public health authorities indicate vaccine is widely available and strongly recommend taking advantage of the vaccine.

Influenza vaccination is recommended for everyone older than six months to fend off viruses that can lead to serious health problems. Annual vaccination is the safest and most effective method to prevent influenza infections. The composition of the flu vaccine is reviewed each year and updated to protect against the three flu viruses that research indicates will be the most common during the upcoming season. Two of the three components of this year's vaccine were changed to keep up with the virus.

Individuals seeking vaccine have many options, including a high dose flu shot approved for people 65 and older, a "short needle" intradermal flu shot approved for people 18 through 64 years of age, and the regular and nasal-spray vaccines. State officials recommend Montanans consult with their healthcare provider regarding the best option.

"People who received influenza vaccine last year should get vaccinated again this year, particularly as the circulating viruses have changed," said DPHHS Director Anna Whiting Sorrell. "And we urge you to get immunized now. With the options available, getting vaccinated is easier than ever. We'd like to make sure everyone can stay healthy this winter."

Protection provided by vaccination lasts throughout the entire flu season, even when vaccine is given in early fall. A new dose is needed every year to keep up active defense against viruses.

“We have particular concern for people with chronic medical conditions and children and urge them to get vaccinated now,” said Lisa Underwood, DPHHS Immunization Program manager. “Those with health issues, young children and senior citizens, are the most at risk for complications, or even death, from the flu. Even with last year’s mild season, we had many people hospitalized and three deaths directly attributable to the flu.”

People wanting to get immunized, or have their children vaccinated, should consult their health care provider. Vaccinations are available at doctor offices, county or tribal health departments, and many pharmacies.

More information can be found at the DPHHS web site: www.dphhs.mt.gov