



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Get your flu shots as early as possible, despite some shipping delays

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health urges all people to take flu vaccine this year as early as possible, even though some manufacturers are experiencing shipping delays.

Currently, the United States has four influenza vaccine manufacturers that are expected to provide vaccine during the 2015-16 influenza season. Three out of the four companies that manufacture flu shots are experiencing some shipping delays. The fourth company that manufactures the nasal-spray influenza vaccine is also experiencing significant shipping delays into January 2016. The delays from manufacturers of influenza vaccine are occurring both in the private and public sectors.

Influenza viruses change from year to year and influenza vaccines must be updated every year. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine annually, and this is especially important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. In addition, people in good health should get the flu vaccine to protect those around them. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for a person to develop protective antibodies.

“Get the flu shot early for maximum protection,” Dr. Karen Landers, medical consultant for the Immunization Division, advised. Landers stated, “Preventive measures are important, because viruses can live on surfaces more than 30 minutes. Wash your hands often and don’t touch your hands to your nose or eyes. If you come down with flu, don’t go to school or work and see your health care provider for antiviral medication. Antivirals taken within the first two days of having flu are extremely effective.”

Currently, Alabama has no recorded influenza activity and no positive influenza tests over the past three weeks. Alabama’s influenza season generally peaks in January and it continues through March. Vaccination should continue to be offered throughout the flu season, even in January or later.

For more information about the availability of influenza vaccine, contact your health care provider, county health department or community vaccinator.