October 1, 2018

Dear Parents:

The Florida Department of Health reports influenza activity levels have begun increasing across the state in recent weeks. This increase in activity is typical for this time of the year, as the 2018-19 influenza season as just begun.

Influenza can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of influenza infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as young children, the elderly, and people with certain health conditions are at higher risk for serious complications from influenza. The Florida Department of Health is encouraging families to get vaccinated for influenza. Influenza vaccines are safe and the best way to protect against influenza and its potentially severe complications.

The best way to protect your child and your family during influenza season is to:

1. Get vaccinated,
2. Keep sick family members home,
3. Contact your health care provider if you or your child are experiencing flu-like symptoms (common symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body ache, and headache),
4. Follow your physician’s guidance on treatment, and
5. Take additional steps to prevent the flu by staying away from people who are sick, frequently washing your hands with soap and warm water, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.

Annual influenza vaccination is crucial for children with underlying health conditions including asthma, diabetes heart disease, and neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions. Influenza vaccines are offered in many locations including pharmacies, clinics, employers, and schools. Contact your physician, county health department, or visit www.floridahealth.gov/findaflushct to find a location offering influenza vaccines near you. While rare, influenza-associated pediatric deaths are reported each season, most often in unvaccinated children with underlying health conditions. Influenza vaccination has been shown to significantly reduce a child’s risk of dying from flu. For more information, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/flu/parents/index.htm.

Sincerely,

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