



**For immediate release**

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## **Flu Shots Now Available at Local Health Department**

It's time to roll up your sleeve! Flu shots are now available at Lewis and Clark Public Health.

Health experts recommend a yearly flu shot for everyone age 6 months or older – before the end of October if possible. It's the best protection against influenza, a highly contagious virus that can cause mild to severe illness.

“A simple flu shot can spare you several days of misery, trips to the doctor, and missed work or school, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths,” said Shelly Maag, who was recently named public health nurse supervisor at the health department. “The more people who get vaccinated, the better our entire community will be protected.”

Vaccination is especially important for people who are at a high risk of developing severe complications. This includes young children; pregnant women; people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease; and people 65 or older. A high-dose flu vaccine is available for the latter to offer extra protection.

This year, on the recommendation of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the health department will not offer nasal flu mist. The CDC has determined that it isn't very effective in preventing flu.

Flu shots are available at the health department's regular walk-in immunization clinics Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 1930 Ninth Avenue. No appointment is needed; shots are provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Beginning Oct. 3, the health department will adopt new hours for its walk-in clinics: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The department can bill all insurance providers, so bring insurance information with you. Options are also available for those without insurance. Wear short or loose sleeves to make immunization easier.

In the United States, flu season usually begins in October and can last until May. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body to develop immunity.

For more information, contact the health department at 457-8900.