



catawba county public health

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FLU SHOTS AVAILABLE AT CATAWBA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

HICKORY, NC – Each year, seasonal influenza is an illness that can cause serious health complications, including death. This year, though, the flu season will look a little different, as we will also have COVID-19 circulating. For many people, symptoms of both illnesses are similar and one could be mistaken for the other, or people could have both at the same time.

As in previous years, the best defense against the flu is vaccination, which is why Catawba County Public Health encourages individuals to visit their medical provider for a flu shot before flu season arrives in full force. This year, it is especially important to get the flu shot, as people who receive the shot are less likely to come down with the flu and those who do happen to are less likely to experience serious complications that may require hospitalization. This helps the medical system avoid becoming overwhelmed with both COVID-19 and flu cases at the same time.

Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. Although the flu shot does not cover all strains of the flu, it covers the virus strains that science shows could be most common this year. This prediction is based on what circulated last year alongside the strains that more recently circulated in the southern hemisphere.

For people who do not have a medical provider or who wish to obtain a shot at Public Health, appointments in our Immunization clinic can be made by calling (828) 695-5881.

Flu shots are available at Public Health for individuals age 6 months and older. The seasonal flu shot costs \$39 for individuals age 3 and older and \$39 for children ages 6-35 months. For people 65 and older, the high-dose flu shot is available for \$74. Accepted forms of payment include cash, check, debit/credit, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Medicare Part B (only), NC Medicaid, and NC HealthChoice. Medicare Advantage and other insurance plans will not be accepted; however, individuals may pay and then file with their insurers for possible reimbursement.

“Flu can be a severe illness with serious complications that require hospitalization and, in some cases, can lead to death. This illness should be taken seriously,” said Sarah Rhodes, Clinical Nursing Supervisor for Catawba County Public Health. “With COVID-19 also circulating in our community, is especially important to get the flu shot this year so we can reduce the number of people hospitalized from one or both diseases at the same time.

“With flu shots now widely available in our community, this is a step everyone can take to protect themselves and their loved ones from this easily spread illness.”

The CDC recommends anyone 6 months or older get the flu vaccine. The vaccination is highly

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recommended for individuals who are at a higher risk for flu-related complications, including the following:

- Anyone with underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or chronic lung disease
- Pregnant women
- People 65 years or older
- Caregivers, especially those individuals caring for infants or people with health complications

Catawba County Public Health promotes and protects the health of all Catawba County residents through preventive services, innovative partnerships, and community health improvement initiatives. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth.

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