

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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INFLUENZA ACTIVITY INCREASING THROUGHOUT THE BAY AREA

Santa Clara County, CA. Public Health Departments around the Bay Area are announcing that influenza activity is increasing and has reached "widespread" levels.

"For many people, the flu can mean feeling miserable for a few days," said Dr. Sara Cody, Health Officer, Santa Clara County. "But for others, including very young children, the elderly, and those with chronic health problems or weakened immune systems, the flu can lead to severe illness and even death."

In recent years the flu has killed between 12,000 and 56,000 people each year in the United States, according to the CDC. In the US, influenza activity reaches its highest levels between December and February, and may continue through May.

Since flu activity in California has not yet peaked, it is not too late to get vaccinated.

Public Health Officials recommend the annual flu vaccine for everyone six months of age and older, including pregnant women. People at highest risk for severe complications from the flu include adults 65 years of age and older, children younger than 5 years old, pregnant women, and those with certain medical conditions like asthma, heart disease, and weakened immune systems.

Even if a person is not in a high risk group, getting the flu vaccine is a safe and effective way to help protect family, friends, and coworkers who may be at greater risk. In addition to getting the vaccine, health officials advise people to take the following steps to protect themselves and loved ones from influenza.

- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue. If you do not have a tissue, cough into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Stay home when you are sick, and stay home until you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours.

Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue. People at higher risk of severe disease who show flu symptoms should contact their medical provider. Medical providers may prescribe antiviral medications that reduce the severity and duration of illness.

To find a location for getting a flu vaccine, go to <https://vaccinefinder.org>

Media Availability for Dr. Cody: Friday, January 6, 2017 from 11 am to 12 noon

976 Lenzen Avenue, San Jose

Call Joy Alexiou at (408) 595-2936 to schedule an interview

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