



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY  
**Health Department**

1930 Ninth Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601  
PH: 406.4HEALTH or 406.443.2584  
Fax: 406.457.8990

**PRESS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Kay Robertson, Public Health Nurse, Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department, 457-8945, [krobertson@co.lewis-clark.mt.us](mailto:krobertson@co.lewis-clark.mt.us)

**Influenza has arrived in Lewis & Clark County**  
**It's not too late for a flu shot.**

**HELENA** – Influenza is here. It arrived in Lewis and Clark County this week with three confirmed influenza A cases. Health care providers continue to screen and test persons for influenza illness. Several influenza cases have also been confirmed in Cascade, Gallatin, Missoula, and Deer Lodge Counties.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against influenza and decrease influenza-related complications. Influenza season most often peaks in February, but influenza viruses can continue to cause illness into the spring. Protection against the flu develops within two weeks after being vaccinated. “The good news is getting vaccinated now can still protect you against the flu this season and there is amply supply to go around,” says Kay Robertson, RN, public health nurse at the Health Department.

The CDC advises people of all ages, from six months of age to seniors can get a flu shot. And every year it is estimated that one in four college students will get the flu. A new study done at the University of Minnesota and St. Olaf’s College found that, in addition to being healthier, students who received flu vaccinations had a much lower risk of missed classes, did better in school, and spent less money in clinics.

The flu is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs that is caused by the influenza virus. This highly contagious illness is spread from person to person. Symptoms include; fever, headache, dry cough, sore throat, sore muscles, and the chills. Some people, especially children, may also have stomach problems and diarrhea. Cough can last two or more weeks. On average, 200,000 people are hospitalized every year because of influenza and 36,000 people die. Older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions may be at high risk for serious flu complications.

The Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department offers flu shots on a sliding-fee scale every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11 AM – 4:30 PM. For more information, call the **Flu Hotline at 457-8904** or stop by the Health Department at 1930 Ninth Avenue.

*The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department’s mission is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents.*

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