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IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO GET A FLU SHOT

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Milton, FL – Following reports of increased flu activity throughout the state, the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County (DOH-Santa Rosa) would like to remind everyone that it is not too late to get a flu shot. A flu shot is recommended for everyone over the age of six months and is a safe and easy way for individuals to protect themselves and their families from the flu.

Those most at risk for serious complications from the flu include pregnant women, individuals aged 65 and older, young children and those with immune systems compromised by chronic diseases including diabetes, heart problems, asthma and HIV/AIDS. Infants under the age of six months are too young to get the flu vaccine. The best way to protect the little ones is by vaccinating family members and care givers.

According to Michelle Hill, RN, a nursing program specialist with DOH-Santa Rosa, the health department is seeing a gradual increase in flu activity in our area. "It is a slight increase and not alarming at this point," she said, "but it is a good reminder that the flu is still circulating and it is not too late to get a flu shot."

The Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County offers the flu vaccine at its clinic in Milton on Mondays and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., at its clinic in Midway on Tuesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and at the clinic in Jay the first Wednesday of the month from 9:00 a.m. to Noon. The fee is \$32.00. Some types of insurance are accepted. The vaccine is covered by Medicare for those who are eligible and is free for children six months to 18 years of age through the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC). However, quantities of the VFC vaccine are limited and it is suggested that parents call the clinic to inquire whether the free vaccine is available.

In addition to the annual flu vaccine, the Florida Department of Health suggests these tips for avoiding the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol based hand sanitizer may be used.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue away after use, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to seek medical care, and keep children home from school or daycare, until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

For more information on flu shots and other services available at the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County, visit our website at <http://santarosa.floridahealth.gov/index.html>. For information on the availability of VFC vaccine, call 850-983-5200.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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