



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 1, 2007

Health district names Oct. 15 - Oct. 19 'Flu Awareness' Week

LAS VEGAS - In preparation for the upcoming flu season, the Southern Nevada Health District has selected Oct. 15 through Oct. 19 as Flu Awareness Week.

"Each year we focus on educating Southern Nevadans about influenza as it can be spread easily and result in serious illness and, in some cases, death. This year, we have taken an additional step with Flu Awareness Week to make people aware of the importance of flu shots and preventive measures they can take to stay healthy," said Dr. Lawrence Sands, the health district's chief health officer. It is estimated that one in five people will get the flu this year. The illness causes more than 30,000 deaths and 200,000 hospitalizations in the United States annually.

During Flu Awareness Week, the health district will emphasize the importance of taking a few simple precautions to prevent illness, including:

- Getting vaccinated - Flu shots are strongly recommended for people at increased risk. This includes children 6 months to 5 years old, pregnant women, people over 50, people with chronic medical conditions and their household contacts or caregivers, and healthcare workers.
- Washing your hands often with warm soap and water for at least 30 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth as they are entry points for germs.
- Coughing and sneezing into a sleeve or tissue.
- Eating right, drinking plenty of fluids and getting enough sleep.

"While following these steps is important during flu season, we wanted to take one week to really focus on their importance so that people adopt them as healthy habits," Sands said.

For people who do get sick, the health district advises them to plan a "sick out" from school and work. This is important for recuperation and preventing the flu from spreading to other people, Sands said.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jennifer Sizemore: Sizemore@snhdmail.org | 702.759.1225

Stephanie Bethel: Bethel@snhdmail.org | 702.759.1393

If a person is experiencing flu symptoms such as body aches, fever, cough, sore throat and runny nose, the health district advises people to:

- Stay home to prevent spreading illness.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- See your doctor if you are concerned about your illness, especially if you are at high risk for complications from the flu.
- Know that antibiotics are not effective against the flu.

The health district also encourages families and businesses to develop public health emergency preparedness plans that can be implemented for situations such as an influenza pandemic. It is recommended that a family emergency preparedness kit includes enough supplies to sustain everyone, including pets, for up to three weeks. The kit should contain non-perishable food, one gallon of water per person per day, medications, toiletries and cash.

Flu vaccinations will be given Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the following public health centers:

- Ravenholt Public Health Center, 625 Shadow Lane, Las Vegas
- East Las Vegas Public Health Center, 560 N. Nellis Blvd., Suite E12, Las Vegas
- Henderson Public Health Center, 520 E. Lake Mead Parkway, Henderson
- North Las Vegas Public Health Center, 1820 E. Lake Mead Blvd., Suite F, North Las Vegas
- Spring Valley Public Health Center, 6330 W. Spring Mountain Rd., Ste. C, Las Vegas
(All services at Spring Valley, including immunizations, are available by appointment only. Call 759-0701)

It is best to arrive at any of the health district's public health centers by 4 p.m. for flu shots. For more information, contact the health district's immunization project at (702) 759-0850 or visit the health district website, www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org or www.flurevolution.com.

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