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**For Immediate Release**

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**Time to get your flu vaccination**

SPRINGFIELD, Ore. – This flu season could be severe, say the experts who have been tracking flu trends in the southern hemisphere.

To protect ourselves and our community, everyone is encouraged to get their flu shot—ideally by the end of this month.

“Getting vaccinated is a quick, safe and easy way to prevent contracting the flu and spreading it to others,” said Dr. Bob Pelz, PeaceHealth’s medical director for infection prevention.

“I get the flu shot every year because I have a responsibility to do everything I can to protect my patients, coworkers, friends and family as much as I can,” he said.

**Who should be vaccinated and when?**

Flu season typically begins in November or December and can ramp up quickly. The CDC recommends getting the flu shot before the end of October – although it’s never too late while the disease is still present in the community. It usually takes about two weeks after a shot for the vaccine to reach full effect.

The vaccination is safe and effective for nearly everyone. These groups, who are particularly vulnerable, should make flu shots a priority:

* Anyone 65 and older
* People with certain medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease
* Pregnant people
* Children younger than 5

“We encourage families to bring their kids 6 months and older in for their flu vaccination as soon as possible,” said Dr. Serena Black, a pediatric hospitalist at Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend and PeaceHealth’s director of children’s medical services.

“Influenza is highly contagious and can be easy to spread among children in daycare and school settings and has potential to make kids very sick. Even if they have mild symptoms, infected children can pass the flu on to grandparents or others who are at high risk of complications if they get sick.”

**Where are flu shots available?**

**Pediatrics**: PeaceHealth Pediatrics has set aside times specifically for flu vaccinations at the RiverBend Pavilion clinic in Springfield and the University District and Barger clinics in Eugene. Please call your pediatrician’s office to schedule an appointment.

A clinic for children 6 months to 11 years old in the Cottage Grove area will be held on Saturday, Oct. 29, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center, 1515 Village Drive. No appointment is needed.

Visit [www.peacehealth.org/flushot](http://www.peacehealth.org/flushot) for the dates and times of all the pediatric vaccination clinics.

**Adults**: Many PeaceHealth family medicine clinics are scheduling flu shot clinics. Please schedule using MyPeaceHealth, or call ahead. For more details about offerings in each community, please visit [www.peacehealth.org/flushot](http://www.peacehealth.org/flushot).

Area pharmacies also are a good option.

**What else can I do to protect against the flu?**

Continue to wash your hands frequently. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and dispose of the tissue in the trash. Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and limit contact with others when you feel sick.

The flu vaccine is never a 100 percent guarantee you won’t get sick, but it can significantly lower your chances of becoming ill. And even if you do get the flu, you’ll likely experience milder symptoms if you’ve been vaccinated.

**About PeaceHealth:** PeaceHealth, based in Vancouver, Wash., is a not-for-profit Catholic health system offering care to communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. PeaceHealth has approximately 16,000 caregivers, a group practice with more than 900 providers and 10 medical centers serving both urban and rural communities throughout the Northwest. In 1890, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace founded what has become PeaceHealth. The Sisters shared expertise and transferred wisdom from one medical center to another, always finding the best way to serve the unmet need for healthcare in their communities. Today, PeaceHealth is the legacy of the founding Sisters and continues with a spirit of respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice in fulfilling its Mission. Visit us online at [peacehealth.org](http://www.peacehealth.org).

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