



BAPTIST HEALTH®

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Flu shots vitally important this year

ELIZABETHTOWN, KY (Sept. 24, 2020) – Getting a flu shot is more important than ever this year, with the virus that causes COVID-19 – and the virus that causes flu – both spreading this fall and winter. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for all people older than six months.

While there is disagreement among experts about the perfect time to get a flu shot, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends getting vaccinated by the end of October.

“The flu shot is important for everyone because it protects ourselves as individuals but also protects our families and those around us,” said Matthew Stiles, MD, with Baptist Health Medical Group Family Medicine in Bardstown. “If we don’t get the flu, then we can’t pass it along to loved ones.”

Typically, the flu season in Kentucky/Indiana begins in October or November, however we are already seeing influenza infections in Kentucky during September. If the flu shot is given too early, young children and adults over age 65 may see the vaccine’s strength weaken in the final weeks of the flu season, making people in these two groups more susceptible to catching the virus. Flu shots last about six months.

The influenza vaccine takes two weeks to be effective and you can catch the flu during those two weeks.

There are many strains of the flu virus, and there’s no guarantee that the combination chosen for this year means you won’t get the flu. However, getting the vaccine provides benefits even if the flu bug bites you.

“It is always better to get a flu shot. In rare cases, some people do still get the flu but even then they are likely to be much less sick,” Dr. Stiles added. “Getting the flu shot lowers your chances of having to go to the hospital. And if you are hospitalized, you are less likely to be in an intensive care unit.”

Adequate supplies of flu vaccine are expected to be available this season.

Getting a flu shot

Baptist Health Hardin locations have flu vaccine on hand:

Flu shots cost \$40 for the basic flu shot and \$70 for the high-dose vaccine which is recommended for those over age 65. The flu shot may be covered by your insurance.

To help maintain physical distancing, Baptist Health Hardin will also offer curbside clinics at the following locations:

- Baptist Health Medical Group Family Medicine in Bardstown (3615 E. John Rowan Blvd.)
- Baptist Health Medical Group Internal Medicine and Pediatrics in Radcliff (75 Nature Trail Suite 3)

Scheduled curbside clinics will be Saturday, September 26 and Saturday, October 3 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For future dates, to print out your paperwork ahead of time, and for more information about the flu, go to BaptistHealth.com/FluShot.

Who should get the shot

Baptist Health Hardin strongly supports the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendation that **everyone six months of age and older should get the flu shot**. In particular we especially encourage certain high -risk groups to be vaccinated, including:

- Children age six through 59 months and their caregivers
- Women who are or will be pregnant during flu season
- Those age 50 or older
- Those with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or greater
- Anyone over six-months-old with chronic health problems and their caregivers
- Nursing home and long-term care facility residents
- Healthcare workers. Baptist Health requires its employees to have a flu shot unless there are medical or religious reasons why the person cannot be vaccinated.

Getting a flu shot is one of the best ways to prevent the flu, with its fever, headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing and body aches.

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About Baptist Health Hardin

Baptist Health Hardin serves approximately 400,000 residents in 10 Central Kentucky counties (Hardin, LaRue, Meade, Breckinridge, Grayson, Nelson, Hart, Bullitt, Green and Taylor). The 300-bed hospital in Elizabethtown, Kentucky includes 270 acute care, 15 psychiatric and 15 skilled nursing beds. Additionally, Baptist Health Hardin includes 50+ outpatient facilities across the service area including a Cancer Care Center, Outpatient Surgical Center and two Urgent Care Centers. There are more than 550 physicians and advanced practice clinicians in over 40 specialties and primary care including Hospitalists available 24/7; Emergency and Urgent Care; Cancer Care, Cardiac, Ear, Nose and Throat, Orthopedics, Neurosurgery, Plastic and Reconstructive, Pulmonology, Rehab and Therapy, Urology, and Vascular Services; Medical and Surgical Services; Diagnostic Imaging; Obstetrics including a Level II Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU); and Pediatrics. With 2,900+ employees and an active volunteer corps of 140, Baptist Health Hardin is the third largest employer in Hardin County.