News Release

Westchester gov.com

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

Date: December 7, 2022
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WESTCHESTER COUNTY URGES RESIDENTS TO GET FLU SHOT

Westchester County Health Department Offers Flu Vaccines

(White Plains, NY) – The Westchester County Health Department is warning residents that influenza is widespread, and urging residents to get their annual flu shot without delay.

There have already been 14 pediatric flu deaths this season, nationwide. Hospitalization rates have been highest in people over age 65 and children under four years of age, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, said: "As you prepare for holiday gatherings, place a flu shot at the top of your to-do list. This is a great way to protect yourself and the people you care about, both young and old. The flu vaccine is the best protection we have and it can help you avoid the worst outcomes from the flu, including hospitalization and death. Flu activity is already robust, and the vaccine appears to be a good match for the viruses circulating."

Flu activity is usually highest between December and February, but can last into May. One flu vaccine now provides protection all season long. The vaccine becomes fully effective after about two weeks.

Flu vaccines are offered by most area drug store and supermarket chains. To book a flu vaccine near you, go to www.vaccines.gov. Flu shots are also offered by appointment at the Westchester County Health Department clinic on Mondays and Fridays at 134 Court Street in White Plains. Residents can view the clinic schedule at www.westchestergov.com/health.

Vaccination is especially important for people who are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, including young children. Millions of children get sick with flu every year, and thousands will be hospitalized as a result.

Amler said: "Your flu shot protects you and it protects those around you who are more vulnerable to flu complications, such as infants too young to be vaccinated, seniors and people with chronic health conditions."

Dr. Amler said that anyone who does get a respiratory infection should consider COVID/influenza testing. For older adults and very young children, RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, can also be of concern. To keep infants healthy, wash hands often, avoid touching the face with unwashed hands, clean and disinfect toys and other frequently touched surfaces, cover coughs and sneezes and avoid contact with sick people.

To avoid spreading germs to others, residents who are symptomatic should wear a mask; cough or sneeze into their elbow; wash their hands frequently with soap and water; stay home until 24 hours after their fever subsides to avoid spreading germs; clean surfaces they touch frequently, such as doorknobs, water faucets, refrigerator handles and telephones; and get plenty of rest.

About Westchester County
Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just over a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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