



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oklahoma Insurance Provider shares flu and pneumonia prevention information

Millions of Americans are impacted by the seasonal flu each year and this season presents additional concerns

OKLAHOMA – The seasonal flu impacts millions of people in the U.S. each year. In Oklahoma, nearly 90 deaths and 3,600 hospitalizations were reported for the 2019-2020 flu season. The flu is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and, in some cases, death. Every flu season is different, but millions of people get the flu every year, with hundreds of thousands being hospitalized and tens of thousands dying from flu-related cases. An annual flu vaccine is the best way to help protect against influenza. Another serious illness with a recommended vaccine is pneumococcal disease, or *pneumonia*. The disease is common in young children, but older adults are at the greatest risk of serious illness and death.

“Vaccines can lower the risk of disease, hospitalizations and death in children and older adults. Even if you get sick, vaccines can reduce the seriousness and length of the illness,” said GlobalHealth medical director Dr. Wesley Williams. “With the rise of COVID-19 in the past year, it’s more important than ever to get flu and pneumonia vaccines and do our best to maintain our good health.”

An annual vaccine is recommended to prevent both flu and pneumococcal disease. GlobalHealth is providing this information to encourage all Oklahomans to get vaccinated.

What is the flu? The flu is a respiratory illness caused by an influenza virus. Older people, young children and people with cancer, diabetes, heart disease or asthma are more at risk to develop the flu.

What is pneumococcal disease? Pneumococcal disease is an infection caused by bacteria that results in diseases like ear infections and meningitis. Pneumococcal disease is most common in young children, but older adults are at greater risk of serious illness and death.

Why should I get vaccinated? Vaccines can keep you from getting sick and prevent major medical events connected with heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease. They can also protect women during and after pregnancy. The flu vaccine can lower the risk of having to go to the doctor by 40-60%. In addition, the flu vaccine can lower the risk of flu-associated hospitalizations by 82%.

Who should get vaccinated? Everyone six months or older should get a flu vaccination. All children younger than two years old, all adults over the age of 65 and those between 19 and 64 who smoke should get the pneumococcal vaccine. There is no pneumonia season, so your PCP can decide the best time for you to be vaccinated. It's important to know that sometimes, after these vaccines, you can experience redness, tenderness, and soreness at the injection site. You could also get a low-grade fever or aches. These symptoms are mild and should disappear in a few days but if the symptoms are concerning to you, you should contact your primary care physician (PCP).

Where can one get these vaccines?

Vaccines are widespread and available for adults and children at your PCP or local county health department. To find your county's health department, search [here](#). For children, it's only recommended that they receive vaccines from their PCP or local health department, but adults can conveniently get vaccines at participating major retail pharmacy locations, including:

- [CVS](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [Walmart](#)
- [Sam's](#)
- [Target](#)
- [Costco](#)

Other pharmacies are available in GlobalHealth's network.

About GlobalHealth

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with its members, GlobalHealth engages a personalized management plan to address their specific needs and ensure the best possible health outcomes. GlobalHealth utilizes cutting-edge, predictive data technology as a foundation to deliver improved health care as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes state, education and municipal employees, federal employees and individuals who are eligible for Medicare. To learn more, visit www.GlobalHealth.com.

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