THE FLU

DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health

PROTECTING ELDERLY AND OTHERS WHO ARE VULNERABLE

The flu can be particularly hard on the elderly and other vulnerable people, so extra precautions are important. Flu vaccines can both prevent the disease, and make it milder if you do get the flu. That means fewer hospitalizations and fewer sick days.

Vaccinations are offered through physician offices, and many pharmacies and grocery stores. For information on the flu or where to get vaccinated, visit **www.flu.delaware.gov** or call 800-282-8672.

To Protect Seniors And Vulnerable Populations

- **Ensure all your loved ones are vaccinated against the illness.** Vaccines are available from DPH clinics, physicians, pharmacies, and many grocery stores.
- **If you are receiving treatment in a long-term care facility or in-home care**, ask if the staff is vaccinated against the flu and, if not, the staff person should be wearing a mask at all times.
- **Visits at home or in a facility should be limited if the visitor is under age 16**, or has the flu or is at risk of exposure to the flu. The illness can be transmitted prior to someone showing symptoms.
- **If living with a senior and a family member contracts the flu**, keep the two separate as much as possible and ensure everyone in the home follows sanitary precautions.
- **Wash hands frequently with soap** or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after you cough, sneeze or touch your face.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue** and dispose of the tissue immediately. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your inner elbow. Droplets from a sneeze can travel up to six feet.
- **Stay home when sick** and do not return to work or school until 24 hours after a fever is gone.
- **Contact a medical provider immediately** if flu symptoms appear.
- **Anti-virals may need to be prescribed** to help lessen the severity and length of the illness, but are most effective if taken early.

In addition to seniors, others who are most vulnerable are the very young, pregnant women and those who recently gave birth, and people with underlying medical conditions, such as lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, and individuals with weak immune systems. These precautions should be applied to these groups as well.

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue.

The flu vaccine saves lives.
GET IT.