

# State Health Officials Report

## Two Flu-Related Deaths, Encourage Vaccination

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RALEIGH — The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services today announced the state's first flu-related deaths of the 2017-18 season after two adults died of complications from influenza infection from mid-to-late October. One of the deaths occurred in the piedmont region of North Carolina, and the other occurred in the eastern region of the state.

To protect the privacy of the families, neither person's hometown, county, age or gender will be released.

"We offer our deepest sympathies to the families," said State Epidemiologist Zack Moore, M.D., MPH. "These personal losses are also a reminder for all of us that flu can be a serious illness. We strongly encourage people to protect themselves by getting a flu shot this season if they haven't already."

Flu shots are available at hospitals, pharmacies, private medical offices, some federally qualified health care centers and local health departments. The Flu Vaccine Finder at [flu.nc.gov](http://flu.nc.gov) can help people find flu clinics near them.

Flu infections are most common from late fall to early spring in North Carolina, with peak activity usually occurring in January or February. The CDC recommends yearly vaccination against the flu for everyone 6 months and older. For the second year in a row, the CDC is recommending the injectable vaccine instead of the nasal spray because of concerns about the nasal spray's effectiveness.

According to studies cited by the CDC, vaccination against the flu can:

- Protect people who are at greater risk of becoming seriously ill from flu, like older adults, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions (including obesity) and young children
- Make illness milder and reduce the risk of more serious outcomes
- Protect pregnant women and their developing babies

People should take the following precautions to protect against the spread of flu and other viruses:

- Stay home when sick until fever-free for at least 24 hours
- Wash hands frequently, preferably with soap and water
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then discard the tissue promptly

The Division of Public Health posts updates on flu surveillance data every Thursday during flu season at <http://flu.nc.gov>.

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