



# News Release

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## **It's never too late to vaccinate: reducing the spread of Influenza (flu) during flu season**

The Yakima Health District (YHD) is reminding community members to make sure their immunizations are up to date. Vaccines give communities the power to protect children, those that are 65 or older and other vulnerable populations from serious diseases. One of the most important things a community member can do to protect their health and the health of others is get vaccinated according to the recommended [immunization schedule](#).

Unvaccinated community members are not only at an increased risk for disease, but can also spread disease to others who might not be able to receive certain vaccines due to cancer, other health conditions or limited access.

Young children, preteens, and teens all need vaccines to stay healthy throughout the school year. You can access a list of all required vaccinations at the Washington State Department of Health website in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Most health insurance plans cover the cost of vaccines. However, if you don't have insurance, or it does not cover vaccines, the [Yakima Health District Vaccines for Children \(VFC\)](#) program may be able to help. The VFC program provides vaccines for all children in Washington State 18 years and under.

### **Recommendations for influenza prevention:**

- Reduce the spread of viruses/illnesses by frequently washing your hands, covering your mouth when coughing, staying home or avoiding others if sick, and getting your vaccination(s).
- Know how to recognize [flu symptoms](#) and when to seek care- most people will have mild symptoms and should care for themselves at home. Call your health care provider if you are experiencing severe symptoms, or if you are at risk for more severe infection (pregnant, women, the elderly, children under 5 years old, and people with otherwise compromised immune systems).
- Check with your health care provider to make sure that you are up to date on all necessary vaccinations. Influenza vaccine must be updated every year, and all individuals over the age of 6 months are recommended to be vaccinated.
- If you have children under the age of 18 in need of vaccination, contact your provider to see if they participate in the VFC program. You can also check the Yakima Health District [website](#) for a list of participating providers in Yakima County.

- Anyone aged 18 or younger who has flu or is suspected to have flu should not be given Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) or any salicylate containing products (e.g. Pepto Bismol); this can cause a rare, very serious complication called [Reye's syndrome](#)

**For more information:**

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

Washington State Department of Health- Vaccination schedules in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)  
[Washington My IR](#)

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