



Public Information Release

A Different Kind of Flu Shot Clinic

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Health experts in Madison County want everyone to get a flu shot this year. Typically large public vaccination clinics are an efficient way to provide flu shots to residents. But during a pandemic, where the microscopic enemy spreads easily in groups of people, traditional mass clinics are not ideal. Madison County Public Health has one solution to help keep everyone safe while providing critical flu shots: drive-through clinics.

Health Commissioner Chris Cook explains that people have become accustomed to drive-through services during the pandemic. "We've always had drive-through food and banking, but now we are getting our groceries and even car batteries without going into a building," Cook says. "It's an expectation for safety during this pandemic." Public Health is no stranger to drive-through clinics. "We've run drive-through clinics at the fairgrounds in the past and every local health department prepares for these types of activities each year," Cook reports.

Madison County Public Health will begin offering drive-through style flu shots at the Molly Caren Agricultural Center (MCAC), best known for the Farm Science Review, beginning Tuesday, September 29 from 10am to 3pm. Flu shots will be available at the MCAC every Tuesday during the month of October. Flu shots will also be offered on several special evening and weekend clinics using a drive-through at Madison County Public Health's main offices in October.

The flu is a respiratory illness that sickens millions and kills thousands of Americans each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the flu causes anywhere from 12,000 to 56,000 deaths in the US depending on the severity of the season. Unlike a common cold, the flu usually comes on suddenly and is much more severe. Symptoms of the flu include feeling feverish, sore throat, cough, runny nose, body aches, and significant fatigue. Cook said that people often describe the flu as getting hit by a ton of bricks. "If you get the flu, it's typically not something you can just power through. It will take you down for a week," Cook says.

Everyone age 6 months and older is strongly encouraged to get a flu shot this year. The flu shot is especially important for children, seniors, pregnant women, and anyone with a chronic medical condition. Cook says that data from the CDC shows that more than 90% of adults who are hospitalized due to the flu have at least one underlying chronic medical condition. "While everyone should get the flu shot, kids and seniors tend to be especially vulnerable to taking a turn for the worse if they get sick," Cook notes. "About 20,000 kids are hospitalized each year due to the flu." The flu season typically peaks during the months of December through February, making right now the best time to get the flu shot. Cook says that getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever this year with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. "Hospitals will be strained this year with a full season of both flu and COVID-19," he explained.

Madison County Public Health encourages anyone who wants a flu vaccine to visit one of their drive-through clinics. "You can get your flu shot anywhere you want, just as long as you get it," Cook says. "By coming to one of our clinics you'll be helping us test our plans for our upcoming drive-through COVID-19 clinics."

Madison County Public Health accepts most insurances for flu shots and no one is turned away due to lack of insurance or inability to pay. For more information about flu shots including all dates and times of clinics visit flu.madisonph.org or call 740-852-3065.