

Flu Myths...Busted!

There are so many myths about the flu and the flu shot all over the internet, so in preparation for the Drive Thru Mass Flu Shot Clinic at the Richland County Fire Hall on September 30th, we've busted a few myths wide open.

The first, and biggest, myth is that the flu went away. Unfortunately, that isn't true. While it is true that there were no cases of influenza reported in the 2020-2021 flu season, scientists and public health professionals believe that our actions to protect against the spread of COVID-19 also protected us from the flu. Both diseases are respiratory infections that are prevented by hand-washing, mask-wearing and social distancing. Since we are doing less mask-wearing and less social distancing (and hopefully equally as much hand-washing!) we expect to see positive flu cases during the 2021-2022 flu season.

The second biggest myth is that the flu shot contains the COVID-19 vaccine as well. This is also not true- the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine remain separate vaccines. The flu vaccine offered by the Health Department protects against four strains of influenza. The COVID-19 vaccine protect only against COVID-19 infection, and is not offered at the Mass Flu Shot Clinic.

The third biggest myth worth busting is that COVID-19 is actually just the regular seasonal flu with a new name. This is also not true. The two are separate and genetically different viruses that may produce similar symptoms. Therefore, the two viruses are prevented with two different vaccines. Because they are two different viruses, it is possible to become infected with both.

There are many reasons to get your flu shot this flu season. If you have questions or need help with the decision to get you and your family vaccinated again the flu, contact the Health Department at 406-433-2207.

The Richland County Health Department will be holding its annual mass flu shot clinic as a drive-thru at the Richland County Fire Hall in Sidney on September 30th, from 10AM to 6PM. The Drive-Thru Clinic will serve adults only, and offers both regular and high-dose flu shots. No other shots will be given during the clinic. No COVID-19 vaccine will be given. No appointment is needed. Flu shots cannot be given to those who have animals in their vehicles. Children may be in the vehicle, but may not receive flu shots. Follow traffic signs to enter the Fire Hall from the North side.

DO NOT attend the clinic if you are not feeling well. DO NOT attend if you are waiting for test results from a COVID-19 test. DO NOT attend if you have COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

Flu shots, as well as other vaccines, for children and families will be available during regular clinic hours, on Monday and Wednesday, 10:00AM to 4:30PM by appointment. Additional clinic hours are the second Wednesday until 6pm, and the third Thursday of the month, from 1:00PM to 4:00PM by appointment. COVID-19 vaccines are available on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 3:00 without appointment. Check the Department Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RichlandCountyHealthDepartment for changes to regular clinic hours.

For further information or to inquire about group billing, contact the Richland County Health Department at 406-433-2207.