



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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**NEWS RELEASE FOR
IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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National Rise in Flu Cases Causes Local Health Officials Concern

KALAMAZOO, MI—A rise in national flu cases is causing concern among local health officials. The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department (HCS) is urging residents to get vaccinated to slow the spread of influenza virus within the community, especially ahead of the holidays.

The latest CDC data on flu activity (see last page) shows high to very high levels of flu across the country. Previous years reveal much lower levels of flu transmission at the same time. While Michigan's current levels are still low, the combination of an early flu season and underwhelming vaccination rates could drive an uptick in cases within the community. Kalamazoo County has a current Vaccination Coverage Rate of 27%, while Michigan's rate is 24%.

"Any time we see an increase in such a highly contagious respiratory illness nationally, it's cause for concern locally," Kalamazoo County Health Officer Jim Rutherford said. "The flu vaccine is a safe and effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones, and it's readily available. We strongly encourage residents to take advantage in order to slow the spread of influenza locally."

HCS offers flu vaccinations [daily](#) with no appointment necessary. **HCS is hosting a special influenza vaccination evening clinic for families and individuals on Thursday, December 8 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at the Health Department.** Residents should bring their photo ID and insurance card for the no out-of-pocket cost vaccination event. A flu vaccine is also available at local medical offices, pharmacies, and community events. You can visit www.vaccinefinder.org for more local options. Most insurance plans will cover the vaccine cost, but no one will be turned away from the health department for an inability to pay.

Every person six months and older should get an annual flu vaccine, especially certain groups considered at the highest risk, like young children, pregnant women, adults who have chronic health conditions, or adults over the age of fifty. If you receive a vaccination and still get the flu, the vaccine may make flu symptoms milder and the length of illness shorter. The vaccine will also prevent you from spreading the flu

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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to others, including those at risk of more serious illness. Additionally, these simple steps can help stop the spread of flu or other germs and help protect you from getting sick:

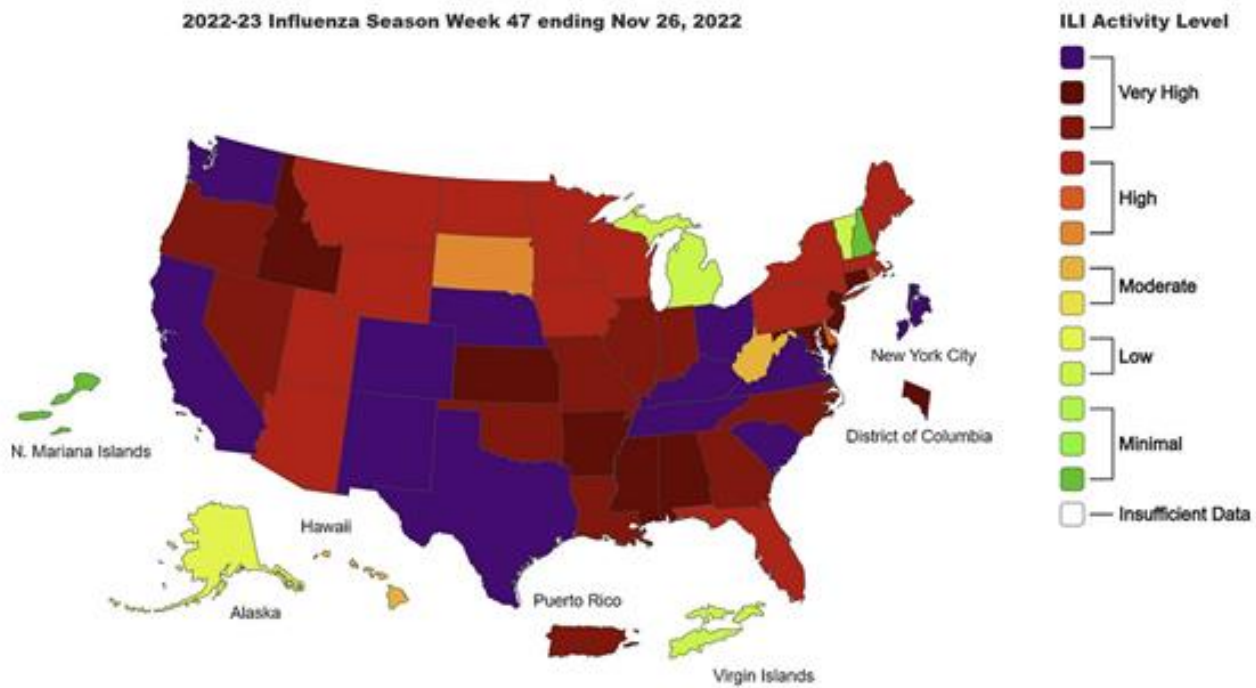
- Stay home when you are sick, which will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean your hands often, with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

For questions regarding the influenza vaccine or for information about county influenza vaccination coverage, visit www.kalcounty.com/hcs/flu vaccine/.

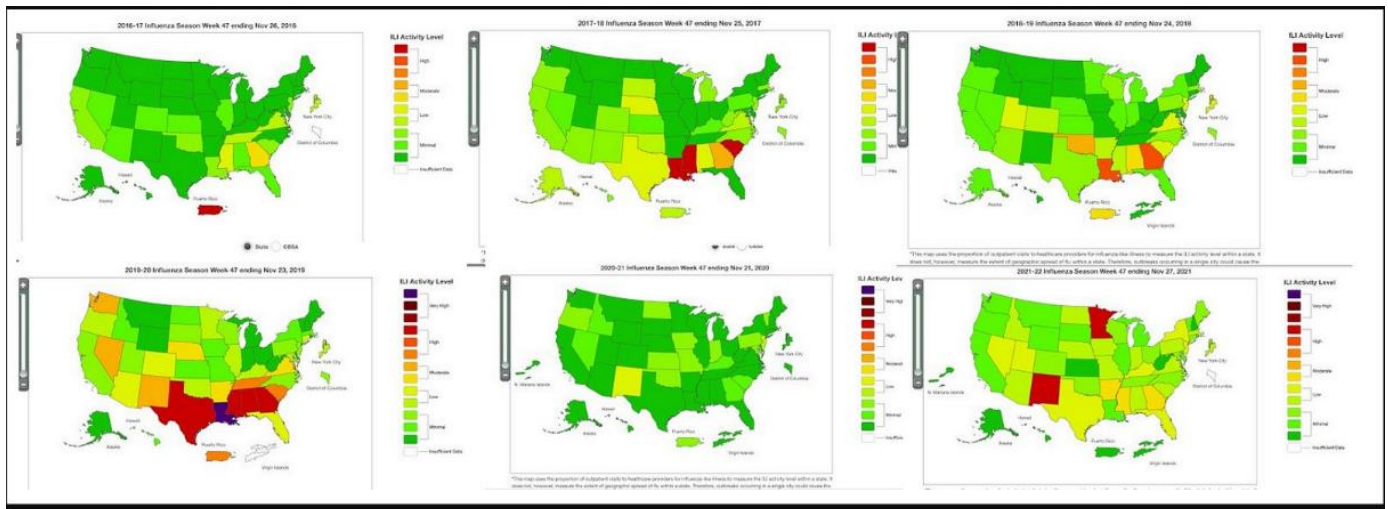
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Kalamazoo County Government
Health & Community Services Department

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CDC flu data for the week ending November 26, 2022.



CDC flu data for week 47 of 2016 through 2021.