

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 10/23/2025**Media Contact:** Katherine Schroeder, PIO, katherine.schroeder@vdh.virginia.gov

Lord Fairfax Health District Encourages Community to Get Vaccinated for the Flu and COVID-19

WINCHESTER, Va. – With the 2025-26 influenza (flu), season officially underway, the Lord Fairfax Health Department encourages everyone six months and older who lives, works or plays in the Northern Shenandoah Valley to receive their annual influenza and COVID-19 vaccines.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported a severe 2024-25 flu season with [record high hospitalization rate](#) in the U.S and the [highest number of pediatric deaths](#) during a regular, non-pandemic season. Last season, [Virginia reported](#) six influenza-associated pediatric deaths and 366 influenza outbreaks.

“Getting your flu vaccine each year is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect yourself, your loved ones, and our community”, says Tara Blackley, District Health Director. “The flu can be serious, especially for older adults, young children, and people with chronic conditions. Vaccination helps keep our hospitals from becoming overwhelmed and helps everyone stay healthy through the winter season.”

Flu season, the period of highest influenza activity, normally begins in early October and ends in late May. While seasonal influenza outbreaks can happen as early as October, during most seasons, activity often peaks in January or February.

A flu vaccine is needed every season for two reasons. First, the body’s immune response from vaccination declines over time, so an annual vaccine is needed for optimal protection. Second, because flu viruses are constantly changing, the formulation of the flu vaccine is reviewed each year and updated to keep up with changing flu viruses.

You should get the influenza vaccine as soon as it becomes available. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating, it’s not too late to get your flu vaccine.

[Influenza](#) is a serious disease caused by the influenza virus that affects the respiratory tract. The flu is highly contagious and generally spreads from person-to-person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can be transmitted even before flu-like symptoms appear. A person usually becomes sick one to three days following exposure to the virus. Typical flu symptoms include fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and extreme fatigue.

To minimize your risk of contracting or transmitting the flu, follow these simple steps:

- Get vaccinated.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough, either by using a disposable tissue or coughing into your sleeve, not your hand.
- Stay at home when you are sick.

The Lord Fairfax Health District offers flu and COVID-19 vaccines at all of its health departments when the vaccine banner is outside the building. Walk in hours for vaccinations are 9-11am and 1-3pm. Most insurances are accepted.

It is safe to get both the flu and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time. For more information, call the Frederick/Winchester Health Department at 540.722.3470 or visit www.LFHD.org. To learn more about influenza, visit the [VDH flu page](#).

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MEDIA NOTE:

Respiratory illness season b-roll is available here: <https://youtu.be/TyXpJGfxeSc>