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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Influenza Vaccination Week: December 4-8

National Influenza Vaccination Week is December 4-8, 2023. This is the time of year to remind everyone that there is still time to get vaccinated against influenza (“the flu”).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year to reduce the risk of getting the flu and lessening the symptoms if you get sick. The best time to get vaccinated is before flu season has started, but it is never too late to get the flu shot. Flu usually peaks between December and February and can continue into May.

“It is important for those at higher risk, including young children, pregnant women, adults 65 years and older, and individuals with certain medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma or lung disease, to get the flu vaccine,” stated Paul Pettit, Public Health Director for Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health). “It is also important for people who live with and care for people who are at higher risk and those who care for infants under 6 months old.

Below are the number of reported flu cases for Genesee and Orleans Counties since 2019 according to the New York State Department of Health. It is important to note that during 2020-2021 there were significantly less confirmed cases of flu partly due to a heightened awareness of practicing precautions like staying home when sick, limiting social gatherings and frequent handwashing during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<u>New York State Department of Health Confirmed Cases of Influenza</u>		
	Genesee County	Orleans County
2019-2020	598	266
2020-2021	7	8

2021-2022	182	100
2022-2023	743	647
2023-2024 (as of 11/25/2023)	9	5

In addition to the flu shot, the following practices are recommended to stop the spread of illnesses:

1. **Stay Home When Sick:** If you develop flu-like symptoms, such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, or fatigue, stay home to prevent spreading the virus to others.
2. **Practice Good Hygiene:** Wash hands frequently with soap and water, and use hand sanitizer when soap is not available. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
3. **Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle:** Eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly, get enough sleep, and manage stress to support a strong immune system.

To find a vaccine site near you visit: <https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines/>

For the Genesee and Orleans Counties Wastewater Dashboard that tracks RSV, COVID-19, and flu in local sewersheds, visit the [GO Health Wastewater Dashboard](#).

For more information on Health Department programs and services, visit GOHealthNY.org or call your respective health department at:

- Genesee County: 585-344-2580 ext. 5555
- Orleans County: 585-589-3278

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