MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

217 South Main Street
Troy, North Carolina 27371-3296
Courier # 03-96-09

Phone 910-572-1393 ext.1226
Fax 910-572-8177
E-mail:mary.perez@montgomerycountync.gov

From the Desk of: Mary Perez-Baldwin, MSN, RN
                        Health Director

September 15, 2023

Information is also provided in Spanish below. (Información en español a continuación.)

Everyone 6-months and older should get the fall COVID-19 vaccine along with a flu shot. Because the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve, the updated COVID-19 vaccine is designed to match the changed virus and help protect people from serious illness, hospitalization and death. The vaccine becomes available at a time when North Carolina is seeing an increase in COVID-19 infections according to the North Carolina Respiratory Virus Dashboard**.**

Vaccines reduce long COVID, particularly among those who stay up-to-date—so get your fall recommended COVID-19 vaccine and boost your protection. Health officials recommend everyone 6 months and older get their annual flu shot before the end of October. Flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) spread in the fall and winter. Like COVID-19, these viruses make people sick and can lead to severe illness and even death, particularly in older adults, young children and those with underlying medical issues.

COVID-19 continues to be a very real risk for many people, and last fall, COVID-19, flu and RSV spread widely at the same time. Safe and effective vaccines are the best way to protect against these viruses. They are especially important for those at higher risk of complications — people 65 and older, children younger than 5, pregnant women and those with certain medical conditions, like asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

For people with health insurance, most plans will cover the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost. Children who are insured by Medicaid or are uninsured or underinsured can get vaccines at no cost through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, which offers vaccines to eligible

children through age 18. The state will also receive a limited supply of free vaccine for uninsured or underinsured adults through the federal Bridge Access Program. These vaccines will be distributed to safety net providers like Community Health Centers and local health departments and to pharmacies participating in the Bridge Access Program.

Resources:

- Press Release
- COVID-19 Website (English/Spanish)
- Flu Vaccine Finder (English/Spanish)
- Social Media (English/Spanish)

Fall Vaccines Info:

- Fall COVID-19 vaccine supplies will begin coming into the state at the end of this week, with more availability starting next week. Check your local health providers. Need help paying for a vaccine? Search vaccines.gov for locations that may provide them for free.
- For more information about COVID-19 vaccines, visit MySpot.nc.gov, call the CDC-INFO Contact Center at 800-CDC-INFO or visit ncdhhs.gov/LHD to contact a local health department. Read the CDC's full statement here.
- Flu vaccines are often available at little to no cost at pharmacies, local health departments, doctor offices and other providers throughout the state. For more information on flu vaccines, visit flu.ncdhhs.gov.
- This year, for the first time, there is an RSV vaccine to protect people 60 years and older. There is also a new medication that can protect infants under 8 months and some older babies at increased risk of severe illness with RSV. People should talk to their doctors about whether RSV protection might be needed for them or their child.