

Nebraska's flu vaccination coverage ranked in the top 10 nationwide for the 2012-2013 flu season. Just over 50 percent of Nebraskans age six months or over got a flu vaccine according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC recommends flu vaccine for everyone six months and older. While flu can make anyone sick, certain people are at greater risk for serious complications, and it's extremely important they receive a vaccine: young children, older people, people with chronic lung disease (like asthma and COPD), diabetes (type 1 and 2), heart disease, neurologic conditions and certain other long-term health conditions; and pregnant women.

Flu vaccine (or FluMist spray) is safe, effective and rigorously tested. The most common reaction is soreness and redness at the injection site. After vaccination, it takes about two weeks for the body to build immunity.

Flu can be a serious disease. It can hit hard and fast and make a person sick for one to two weeks. Severe cases of flu can lead to hospitalization and even death.

Public health officials can't predict what's in store for this year but they say getting vaccinated is the best protection from the flu.

DHHS officially started flu surveillance Sept. 30 which shows where the flu is and how fast it's spreading across the state.

DHHS uses multiple surveillance systems to track flu viruses, including sentinel physicians lab tests, school surveillance, hospital data, emergency department data and death reporting.