



In Partnership with
Alameda County Public Health Department
California Department of Public Health
Oakland Unified School District

Shoo the Flu Brings Flu Protection to Oakland Students

All Pre-K through Fifth Grade Students in Participating Schools Can Receive a Flu Vaccine

OAKLAND, CALIF. Aug. 25, 2014 – Oakland pre-K and elementary school students can get flu vaccines this fall at no cost at school through [Shoo the Flu](#), a program to reduce flu in the community. Shoo the Flu is a partnership of the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD), California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), funded by the Page Family Foundation.

“School-based flu vaccine programs are one of the best ways to protect against the flu in the community,” said Erica Pan, MD, MPH, Director of the Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at Alameda County Public Health Department. “Students can spread the flu quickly. Though it’s recommended for all children over six months, less than half of young children in Alameda County were vaccinated during the last few flu seasons.”

Students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade in most Oakland schools can receive the flu vaccine during school hours. Getting the flu vaccine is voluntary, and at no cost for students, with or without insurance. Most children will receive flu protection through a nasal spray instead of an injection. This year, the expert panel for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) (ACIP), recommended the nasal spray for kids ages 2-8 because it can be more effective than injection. Children with certain health conditions like asthma may need to get an injection.

“The nasal spray is effective for vaccinations given at schools, where needles can cause some anxiety,” said Joanna Locke, MD, MPH, Director of Health & Wellness for Community Schools and Student Services at OUSD. “Vaccines administered at Flu Vaccine Days are the same as what students would get from their regular health provider and will be given by health professionals. This gives parents peace of mind while making flu protection more convenient.”

Besides protecting students and reducing flu in the community, school-based flu vaccine programs reduce absenteeism in students and teachers. For students to get flu protection, parents/guardians must complete and return a consent form, available from schools or at www.ShooTheFlu.org. In addition to OUSD schools, Flu Vaccine Days will be held at private schools, charter schools and schools of the Catholic Archdiocese of Oakland. Staff at participating schools may also receive their flu vaccine at school, at no cost.

Shoo the Flu is partnering with the [University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health](#) to study whether school-based flu vaccine programs reduce the spread of flu in the community. As part of the evaluation, named the Bay Area Flu Study, UC Berkeley researchers will ask parents/guardians and community members to complete surveys on flu and flu-like illness in their households. Parent/guardian recruitment will take place through a smaller subset of OUSD schools. Parent participation in the survey is not a requirement for students to receive a flu vaccine through this program. The UC Berkeley School of Public Health study will provide evidence-based findings for creating sustainable school-based vaccine programs.

“Because of the ongoing challenges in creating sustainable flu vaccine programs, the Bay Area Flu Study aims to show the impact school-based vaccine programs have on shaping an overall healthy community,” said Arthur L. Reingold, MD, professor and head of epidemiology at UC Berkeley’s School of Public Health. “The results of this study will allow us to further support the fact that school-based flu vaccines are very effective, and will hopefully encourage other school districts and communities to adopt similar programs.”

About the Flu

The flu, also called influenza, is a contagious disease that spreads by coughing, sneezing and close contact. Flu symptoms include fever/chills, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, cough and headache. The flu is preventable. The flu vaccine is the most effective way to reduce the chances that people will get the flu and spread it to others. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the flu vaccine for most people over six months old. People can also protect themselves from the flu by having healthy habits: covering their cough with their shoulder or sleeve (not their hands), washing hands frequently and staying home if they do get sick.

About Shoo the Flu

Shoo the Flu is a program to prevent the flu by bringing flu vaccine to Oakland pre-K and elementary school students. By protecting students against the flu, the benefits extend to the larger community. It is a collaboration with the Alameda County Public Health Department, California Department of Public Health and the Oakland Unified School District, funded by the Page Family Foundation. Shoo the Flu is endorsed by California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics.

About the Bay Area Flu Study

The Bay Area Flu Study is an evaluation conducted by the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley, to study the impact of Shoo the Flu. The study will assess whether increased flu vaccine rates can prevent the spread of flu within the community. This evaluation will help build a model for sustainable school-based flu vaccine programs. More information can be found at [BayAreaFluStudy.org](#).

About Oakland Unified School District

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is the State of California's most improved urban school district over the past eight years, as measured by Academic Performance Index (API), California's primary metric for measuring student achievement. During this time, the District's 46,000 students have benefited from 128 points of API growth and a focus on the whole child embodied by OUSD's "Community Schools, Thriving Students" vision of a full-service community school district. In this model, every school site offers high levels of learning along with physical health, mental health, dental and eye care; nutrition, physical education, recreation, before-school and afterschool programs; housing, employment, parenting and language acquisition courses and a range of other programs. Social and human services are not seen as extra or add-ons in these schools. Instead, collaboration in service of children and families is how they consistently behave. To learn more about "Community Schools, Thriving Students", please visit: www.thrivingstudents.org.

About Alameda County Public Health Department

Covering 13 cities, including Alameda, Piedmont, Oakland, Hayward, Fremont, Dublin and Livermore, the Alameda County Public Health Department provides programs and services to protect the health and safety of County residents. ACPHD includes assessments of the health status of residents, disease prevention and control, community mobilization and outreach, policy development, education, and assurance of access to quality medical and health care services. With more than 600 employees, ACPHD is made of public health doctors, epidemiologists, dentists, medical social workers, therapists, dietitians, health educators, program managers and pre-hospital care coordinators in Health and Medical Services divisions. A key component of the ACPHD mission is seeking community involvement, including partnerships with grassroots and corporate entities, with individuals and groups.

About UC Berkeley School of Public Health

Founded in 1943, the University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health jointly administers master of science (M.S.), master of arts (M.A.), and doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees; it also awards a doctor of public health (Dr.P.H.) degree, and the master of public health (M.P.H.) degree in areas of concentration including Maternal & Child Health, Public Health Nutrition, Infectious Diseases & Vaccinology, Environmental Health Sciences among others. Building on a campus tradition of pre-eminent interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholarship, education and public engagement that challenges conventional thinking, the UC Berkeley School of Public Health develops diverse leaders equipped to help solve the health challenges of the 21st century and beyond.