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Flu Shots Now Available at the Health Department

Fall has arrived and the temperature is slightly dropping, a sign that flu season is approaching. This fall the Anson County Health Department wants to inform the public about influenza (flu) and how the department can help prevent the deadly virus.

In the United States flu is detected year-round, however, it is most common during the fall and winter months. Influenza activity often begins to increase in October and November. Flu activity peaks between December and February and can last as late as May.

Flu is a transmittable breathing illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year. Flu is different from a cold and can come on suddenly. Flu symptoms involve:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue
- sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

Although fever symptoms are included, not everyone may have a fever when catching flu. Research shows that flu is spread through tiny droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These tiny droplets can land on people nearby. People with flu are most contagious the first 3-4 days.

The Center for disease control (CDC) recommends everyone over the age of 6 months should get the flu vaccine each season. It is especially important for the following high risk groups:

- pregnant women
- children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- people 50 years of age and older
- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu
- fatigue
- healthcare workers
- household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
- household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age.

The Anson County Health Department started providing flu shots to the public on October 1st. The Health Department offers appointments for flu shots but will also provide walk-in times from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The health department accepts the following primary insurance for the influenza vaccination: Medicare, Medicaid, Medcost, Aetna, Cigna, and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Children without insurance coverage who are ages 6 months through 18 years of age may receive a free influenza vaccination.

Please bring in all insurance cards for verification of primary insurance coverage. The costs for individuals without active primary insurance coverage are: Influenza \$48; High Dose Influenza \$93; and Pneumonia \$83.

The Anson County Health Department is located at 110 Ashe Street in Wadesboro. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment please call Anson County Health Department at 704-694-5188 or 704-994-3321. For further information contact Dinikia Savage at 704-994-3342.

Remind Hunters to Practice Tree Stand Safety

As deer season ramps up, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission reminds hunters to follow safety guidelines when hunting from a tree stand.

"Tree stand accidents are the leading cause of injury to hunters every year," said Chet Clark, the Commission's eastern outreach manager. "Most of these accidents are avoidable. Always remember to wear a fall-arrest system and use it properly. Also, follow your tree stand manufacturer's recommended safety procedures. This little bit of precaution can mean all the difference when out in the field."

The Commission's hunter safety education campaign, Home From the Hunt, offers these tree stand safety recommendations:

- Ensure you do not exceed the stand manufacturer's maximum height or weight settings.
- Before use, check the stand's belts, chains, bolts and attachment cords for damage and wear.
- Select a healthy, straight tree for your tree stand.
- Set up the stand with another person.
- Let someone know where you are setting up your stand ahead of time.
- Bring an emergency signal device, such as a cell phone or a whistle.
- Use a full-body safety harness at all times, and remain connected to the tree from the time you leave the ground to the time you return to the ground.
- Use a lineman's belt and/or lifeline with a proper knot when climbing or descending.
- Use a haul line to raise and lower equipment – Never carry anything as you climb.
- Most falls occur when climbing up or down a stand, so always maintain three points of contact.

"Take your time, be prepared, and don't cut corners when hunting from a tree stand," said Clark. "If you're properly equipped and using the equipment as it's intended, chances for an accident are reduced drastically. The goal is to enjoy the hunt, but ultimately to come home safely."

Hunters can review a free tree stand safety course online. For more information on the Hunter Education Program, hunting seasons and Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permits, visit ncwildlife.org or call 919-707-0031.

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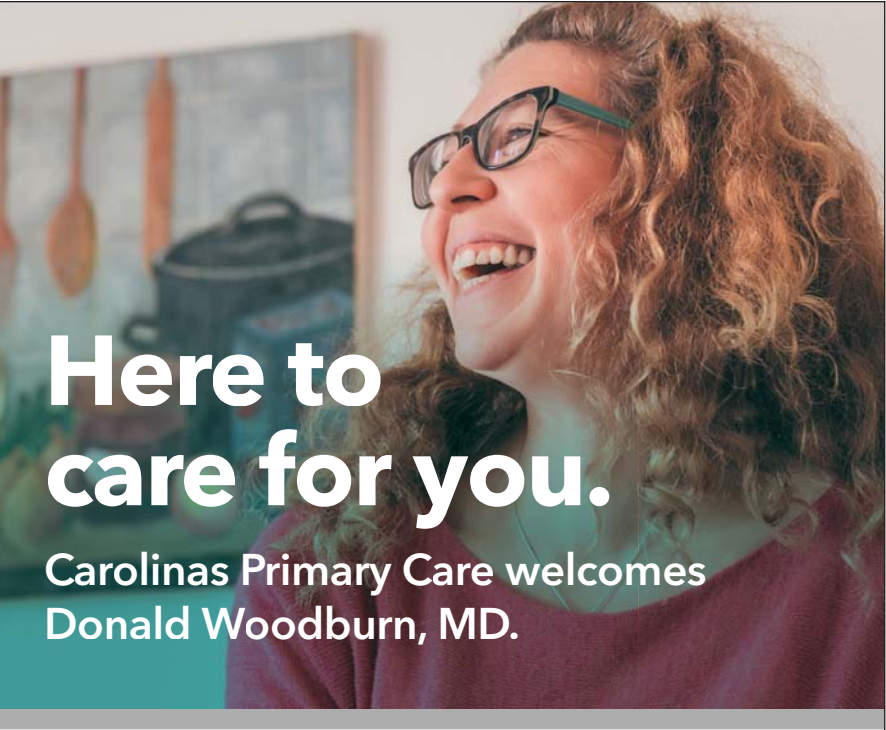
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