

Preparations for Disastrous Weather



All clinics participating in the Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) and Adult Safety Net (ASN) programs should have an emergency plan in case of disastrous weather conditions, such as a hurricane. It is vital providers are prepared for hurricane season and other natural disasters to maintain the safety of staff and patients.

How can clinics prepare for a disastrous weather event?

It is important your facility has an [emergency vaccine management plan](#). An action plan should include:

- Information on maintaining routine vaccine storage and handling.
- Procedures on what to do with vaccines in the event of power loss, storage unit failure, or a natural disaster. These procedures should note whom to contact for guidance on emergency procedures and how to utilize emergency transport supplies. All staff should be aware of these procedures.
- Guidance on preparing emergency transport supplies to ensure vaccines remain viable.

All clinics participating in the Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) and Adult Safety Net (ASN) programs must review and sign a vaccine management plan annually. Vaccine management plans must be clearly visible on or near all storage units that contain program vaccines. In addition, all clinic staff involved with vaccine management must be aware of these plans. TVFC and ASN providers can find [vaccine management plan templates](#) online.

Vaccines for Health Care Workers and First Responders

Health care workers and first responders play a critical role in supporting their communities in the aftermath of a disaster, and both groups should be up-to-date on immunizations to prevent the spread of infectious diseases commonly associated with natural disasters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends:

- First responders receive a tetanus booster every 10 years.
- Health care workers, people involved in direct patient care, and people expected to have contact with bodily fluids receive a hepatitis B vaccine.
- First responders and health care workers get a yearly flu vaccine.

For more information on CDC immunization recommendations for disaster responders, visit CDC: Immunization Recommendations for Disaster Responders website or <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/public/first-responders>

How can patients prepare at home?

To be protected from vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks during a natural disaster it is important for families to stay up to date with the CDC vaccine recommendations. For more information on patient preparations, please visit the [CDC: Preparing for a Hurricane or Other Tropical Storm](#) website.

Protect Against Flu: Caregivers of Older Adults

The flu is a serious health threat, especially in long-term care facilities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found between 70 and 85% of seasonal, flu-related deaths have occurred in people 65 years and older, and between 50 and 70% of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations have occurred among this age group.

It is important for caregivers to get an annual flu shot in September or October. Vaccinated caregivers protect their patients from the flu. While some people who get the flu vaccine may still get the flu, the flu vaccine reduces the severity of the flu illness.

Protect yourself, your co-workers, and your residents by getting the annual flu vaccine.

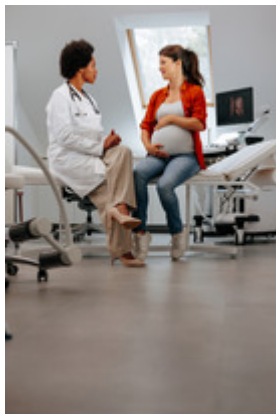


TVFC/ASN Program Survey

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) wants to feature TVFC and ASN program successes! Submissions to be featured in the TVFC and ASN Program News will be accepted on a rolling basis: [TVFC and ASN program survey](#).

Please ensure your answers exclude HIPPA-related information.

Protecting Expecting Mothers and their Babies



Women who are pregnant and postpartum are more likely to have severe illnesses due to influenza (flu) because of changes in their immune system, heart, and lungs. Pregnant women can protect themselves and their babies from flu-related illness for the first six months after birth by getting the flu vaccine. The flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of acute respiratory infection and decrease the risk of being hospitalized by [40%](#).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states flu vaccines are safe for women during any stage of pregnancy. Pregnant women should get the flu vaccine during flu season instead of getting the live attenuated vaccine (LAIV or nasal spray).

When expecting mothers receive the flu vaccine, antibodies are produced and transferred to the developing baby, protecting baby against influenza for up to six months after birth. Mothers who deliver babies before getting the flu vaccine should still be vaccinated to protect against the spread of flu post birth. All newborn caretakers, such as household members, family, and childcare providers, should get a flu vaccine since influenza is spread from person to person

After receiving the flu vaccine, patients may experience some mild side effects such as soreness, tenderness, swelling, and redness at the injection site. Remember the best way to protect newborns from severe flu-related illnesses is to get a flu vaccine.

Expecting mothers should speak with their primary care physician, OB-GYN, or midwife for more information about flu vaccines and to discuss any allergies to flu vaccine ingredients.

For more detailed information on flu vaccines for expecting mothers, visit the [CDC's Influenza \(Flu\) Vaccines and Pregnancy](#).