

For Immediate Release
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NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SUPERHERO TEACHES FLU SAFETY AT PUBLIC SCHOOL IN QUEENS

Ready Girl teams up with Health Department and DOE to teach students about influenza prevention

February 27, 2018 – As influenza continues to spread across New York City, officials have called on a superhero to help students prevent and combat the deadly virus. Ready Girl, the New York City Emergency Management Department’s preparedness superhero, stopped by P.S. 88Q on Tuesday to teach fourth and fifth-grade students of the steps they can take to prevent the flu. Ready Girl along with, Dr. Jane Zucker, Assistant Commissioner for the Bureau of Immunization for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, taught students how to identify symptoms and prevent the spread of germs. The duo also reminded students that there is still time to get a flu shot. A flu shot, administered even after influenza season has arrived, can still provide immunity and mitigate the symptoms and complications should one contract the virus. The vaccine remains readily available; to find a vaccine, New Yorkers can call 311, visit nyc.gov/flu for the Flu Vaccine Locator or text “flu” to 877877.

“It is important to equip our students with the information to protect themselves against the flu,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “Ready Girl is up to the task of teaching our kids the importance of preparedness.”

“Every season, we lose far too many children to this devastating illness – an illness that can be easily prevented and mitigated by getting the flu shot,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “I thank our partners at NYCEM for providing our children with essential information that can potentially save their lives and prevent the spread of illness. It’s not too late to get the flu shot, and we can all be superheroes by taking steps to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy.”

“I thank the NYC Emergency Management for their ongoing partnership to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff across the city,” said **Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Rose**. “We urge all families to get flu shots for their children, and we’re excited to support Ready New York as we share best practices to maintain healthy schools and communities.”

The Health Department has confirmed four pediatric deaths for this flu season. Since 2004, between zero and eight pediatric influenza-associated deaths have been reported to the health department each influenza season. In October 2017, the Health Department launched a citywide awareness campaign, [“I Got My Flu Shot...Not the Flu,”](#) reminding New Yorkers that the flu vaccine is the best protection against influenza and its terrible symptoms. While annual flu vaccination is recommended for all people aged six months and older, it is especially recommended for those at risk of developing influenza-related complications. Those at risk include children under five, pregnant women, people with chronic medical conditions, such as

diabetes, heart or lung disease, and those over 65 years of age. Health care workers and people who live or work with people at high risk of influenza complications also need a flu vaccine to avoid infecting others.

The flu vaccine can help prevent the pain and misery of influenza. It can reduce the risk of hospitalizations among several high-risk groups, including people with diabetes, chronic lung disease and those over 50 years of age. It can also reduce pediatric influenza-related deaths. Pregnant women have a four-fold higher risk of hospitalization if they get influenza. A flu vaccine can protect them and their infant by passing on protective antibodies to their infants until they can get their own vaccine at six months.

Influenza Prevention Tips For Parents

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after use.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- If you or your child is sick with influenza, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them or others and seek care. There are antiviral drugs that a health care worker can prescribe to treat influenza, reducing the time that you are ill and preventing some of the more serious complications of this infection.
- If your child is at a high risk for influenza complications, you should speak to your medical provider about antiviral medication if they develop influenza-like symptoms.
- If a child has a condition like asthma, call a doctor if they show influenza-like symptoms.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care or other necessities. Students should not return to school until they have been fever free without taking temperature-reducing medications for 24 hours.

About Ready Girl

Ready Girl is a superhero and emergency manager who teaches kids about emergency preparedness. She is part of the Ready New York for Kids' program, a joint initiative between NYC Emergency Management and the Department of Education, dedicated to helping educate young students about the importance of emergency preparedness. Since she burst onto the superhero scene back in October 2015, Ready Girl has taken her message all over New York City, visiting hundreds of schools, community centers and youth organizations, and dropping in on local fairs. She has trained thousands of kids throughout the five boroughs, getting every New York City kid ready for any emergency. To keep up-to-date on Ready Girl's every move as she prepares kids for emergencies, visit her [blog](#), and visit nyc.gov/readyny to learn more about the Ready New York program.

NYC Emergency Management 'Prep Talk' Podcast Series

It's not too late to get your flu shot. That's the message Dr. Demetre Daskalakis – Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Disease Control at the New York City Department of Health

and Mental Hygiene – has for New Yorkers. Dr. Daskalakis is the feature guest on episode 6 of “Prep Talk”, the NYC Emergency Management Department’s podcast series. Listen as Dr. Daskalakis discusses the efficacy of the flu vaccine and debunks some of the myths about this season’s flu virus. Find out who’s most at risk to contract the flu, whether or not you can get sick from taking the flu shot, and learn some of the best methods of preventing the virus. For more information about where to get vaccinated, call 311, visit nyc.gov/flu to access the Flu Vaccine Locator, or text “flu” to 877877. Click to listen to episode 6 on [SoundCloud](#) and [iTunes](#).

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