

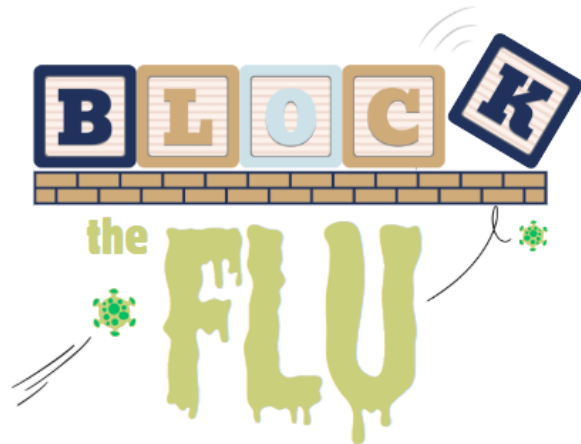
## Welcome back to the Public Health Preparedness Press!



Each month, this newsletter will keep you informed about seasonal preparedness topics, public health awareness campaigns, and tools you can use both in your work and in your everyday life. Whether it's extreme weather, emergency planning, or national health observances, we're here to keep preparedness top of mind year-round.

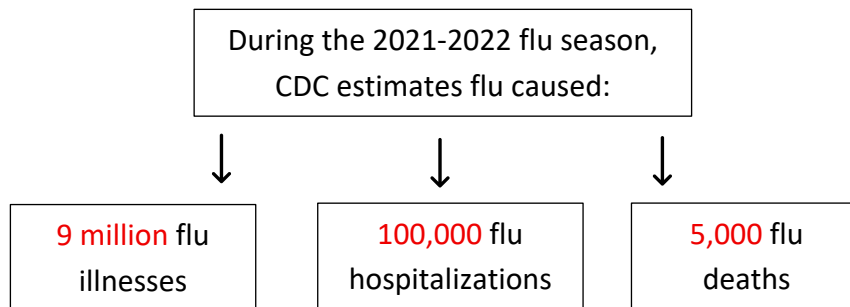
### National Influenza Vaccination Week

In the first week of December, we recognize National Influenza Vaccination Week to remind everyone that the flu season is underway and there's still time to get your annual flu vaccine. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu vaccination remains the most important step in protecting yourself, your family, and our community against influenza and its serious complications.



The vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months and older, especially those at higher risk—pregnant people, young children, older adults, and individuals with chronic health conditions. Even if you haven't been vaccinated yet this season, it's not too late: flu activity typically increases through the winter months. Getting vaccinated not only reduces your chance of getting sick, but lowers the risk of serious illness, hospitalization, and spreading flu to others.

In our role at Brown County Public Health, we encourage all staff, partners and community members to schedule a flu shot if they haven't already.



For more information visit: [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)

## Holiday Fire Safety

As we deck the halls this holiday season, it's important to remember that decorations, lighting, candles, cooking, and dry Christmas trees all increase the risk of home fires. The USFA recommends taking the following precautions:

### Holiday lights and candles:

- Inspect all holiday lights for damage
- Toss out any with frayed cords or cracked socket
- Avoid overloading outlets
- Never leave lights or candles unattended.



### If you're using a real Christmas tree:

- Choose a fresh tree
- Keep it watered daily
- Place it at least three feet away from fireplaces, heaters, or vents.  
*A dry tree is a serious fire hazard*

### Other safety reminders:

- Use only flame-resistant decorations
- Never place wrapping paper or tree branches in fireplaces or wood stoves
- Stay in the kitchen while cooking, especially when frying or roasting (kitchen fires are one of the leading causes of holiday home fires)

By taking these simple precautions, you can help ensure your celebrations stay safe and joyful.

## Winter Weather Safety

As cold weather approaches, now is the time to make sure you, your household, and your vehicle are prepared for snow, ice, and freezing temperatures. Important steps include:

### Prepare your home:

- Seal drafty doors and windows; add insulation or weather-stripping
- Insulate exposed water pipes to prevent freezing or bursting

- Have your heating system inspected and serviced, especially before heavy use
- Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors (especially if using fireplaces, wood stoves or portable heaters)

#### **Prepare your vehicle:**

- Check antifreeze levels, tires, windshield wipers, and all fluid levels before winter begins
- Keep the gas tank near full to reduce the chance of fuel-line freeze-ups
- Maintain tire tread and proper tire pressure for safe driving on icy or snowy roads

#### **Build a winter emergency kit for home and car:**

Include items such as cell phone and charger, flashlight and extra batteries, blankets or warm clothing, water and non-perishable snacks, first-aid kit, snow shovel and ice scraper (for a vehicle kit), and extra supplies for pets.

#### **Stay alert and plan ahead:**

- Monitor weather forecasts and winter-storm alerts
- If a storm is predicted, review and refresh your supplies, fuel and heating sources
- Minimize travel during hazardous conditions; if travel is necessary, let someone know your route and expected arrival time, and be prepared in case you get stranded

Taking these precautions now before snow, ice, or freezing temperatures hit can help keep you and your family safe, warm, and ready for whatever the winter season brings.

#### **What's Next?**

In future issues of the Public Health Preparedness Press, we'll continue exploring topics that matter to our work and our community, like emergency communication, public health response roles, and seasonal hazards.

If you have ideas, questions, or want to highlight team efforts in preparedness, reach out! Let's make this a helpful, interactive resource for everyone.

Thanks for reading! 😊