Most South Dakota students of age 6 to 18 were vaccinated against the flu during the 2011-2012 season, according to the state Department of Health.

Eating well and getting regular exercise can lower your risk for flu. But if you do get sick, get help early to recover more quickly. The health department recommends getting vaccinated every year, which is important because the flu vaccine changes each year. Flus can occur anytime, but tend to be more common in winter months.

Two strategies can help. First, keep hands clean by washing with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub. Second, avoid people who are sick.

The flu can be very serious in some people, and no one is immune. In people who are vaccinated, the flu vaccine provides about 70-90% protection. People who are not vaccinated have about a 20% risk of getting the flu and 10% risk of getting sewed up in a hospital.

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