



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2009

Contact: Tom Schlueter (630) 444-3098

(630) 417-9729 cell

www.kanehealth.com

Best defense against the flu is a good offense: Vaccination and education

As we enter the flu season, the Kane County Health Department wants to remind residents that even a single sick family member can cause disruption in a family's day-to-day life. For example, a sick child can force a parent to stay home from work, possibly losing wages. Businesses, too, can suffer if substantial numbers of their workforces are out ill or are staying home caring for an ill child.

“The best defense against the flu is a good offense. In other words, taking pre-emptive measures such as getting vaccinated and following the Three Cs (cover your cough, clean your hands, contain your germs by staying home) are the best ways to prevent getting or spreading the flu,” said Paul Kuehnert, Kane County Health Department Executive Director.

When providing care to a household member who is sick with influenza, the most important ways to protect yourself and others who are not sick are to

- remind the sick person to cover their coughs, and clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often, especially after coughing and/or sneezing
- have everyone in the household clean their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. Children may need reminders or help keeping their hands clean
- ask your health care provider if household contacts of the sick person—particularly those contacts who may be pregnant or have chronic health conditions—should take antiviral medications such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) or zanamivir (Relenza®) to prevent the flu
- If you are in a high risk group for complications from influenza, you should attempt to avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with household members who are sick with influenza.
- Infants should not be cared for by sick family members.

(MORE)

Also, the Health Department recommends to keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the house. (For example, a spare bedroom with its own bathroom, if that's possible.) Keep the sickroom door closed. Unless necessary for medical care or other necessities, people who are sick with an influenza-like-illness should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel, for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). This is to keep from making others sick. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods

Vaccine for the seasonal flu is now available at many pharmacies or from your physician. A vaccine for the H1N1 virus is expected to be available in October. More information about the seasonal or H1N1 flu viruses is available at the Health Department's Web site at www.kanehealth.com.

#