



October 7, 2015

Contact: Tom Schlueter (630) 444-3098

(630) 417-9729 cell

Stop the flu - Now is the time to get your shot

The Kane County Health Department would like to remind everyone that the influenza (flu) season in Illinois typically starts in October and is recommending that everyone six months and older be vaccinated against influenza. The Health Department suggests that residents check with their physician's office or local pharmacy for the availability of flu vaccine.

The single most effective way to prevent getting the flu is an annual flu shot. Influenza is a serious illness and can be fatal. Even healthy people get the flu each year, so it's important for everyone to be vaccinated. Protecting yourself from flu also protects the people around you who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through that community.

The vaccine comes in the traditional form of a flu shot, but for people who don't like needles, there is an intradermal vaccine given with a much smaller needle, or a nasal spray. There are also high-dose vaccines for people age 65 and older and recombinant (egg-free) vaccines. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that manufacturers are making more than 171 million doses, 40 million of which have already been distributed across the country.

Flu season usually lasts until May. Flu causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands or sometimes tens of thousands of deaths. In the United States, the rate of flu-related hospitalizations among people age 65 and older last season was the highest ever recorded since this type of record-keeping began a decade ago. Flu also hit children hard with 145 lab-confirmed influenza-associated pediatric deaths reported, a number that is known to be an underestimate of the true number of these deaths.

In addition to getting a flu shot, the Health Department recommends following the 3 C's:

- **Clean** – frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- **Cover** – cover your cough and sneeze.
- **Contain** – contain your germs by staying home if you are sick.

Influenza antiviral drugs can be a second line of defense for treatment of some who get sick with flu. Many observational studies have found that in addition to lessening the duration and severity of symptoms, antiviral drugs can prevent flu complications. Because it is important to start antiviral medication quickly, high-risk patients should contact a healthcare professional at the first signs of influenza symptoms, which include sudden onset of fever, aches, chills and tiredness.

###