



DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

111 North County Farm Road, Wheaton, Illinois 60187

(630) 682-7400

www.dupagehealth.org

September 1, 2009

Dear DuPage County School and Child Care Parents, Families, and Staff:

This year's seasonal influenza vaccine is now available. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends **a yearly seasonal flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal influenza**. This flu season may be more severe than usual because of the new H1N1 virus. This means that more people may become sick and more people may get seriously sick. Also, regular seasonal flu viruses will continue to spread and cause illness too. **Yearly flu vaccination should begin in September and continue throughout the influenza season**, into December, January, and beyond. This is because the timing and duration of influenza seasons vary. While influenza outbreaks can happen as early as October, most of the time influenza activity peaks in January or later. A vaccine against the new H1N1 virus is being produced and tested, and is expected to be available in the coming months.

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends that certain people should get vaccinated against seasonal influenza each year: 1) **children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday**, 2) **pregnant women**, 3) **people 50 years of age and older**, 4) **people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions**, 5) people who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, 6) **people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu**, including healthcare workers, household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu, and household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated).

The DuPage County Health Department and Central DuPage Hospital are teaming with Dominick's and Osco Pharmacy to make it easier for you and your family members (14 years of age and older) to get a seasonal flu vaccination. Obtain a coupon to receive a \$5.00 gift card when you get a flu shot at any Chicagoland Dominick's or Osco Pharmacy at www.dupagehealth.org/flu. We encourage you to contact your physician about where you may obtain flu vaccination for your children.

In addition to getting vaccinated, there are everyday actions you can take to stay healthy:

- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. For medical questions or concerns, contact your physician.
- **Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often** with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Cover you nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw it away after use.
- **Do not share eating utensils or drinking containers.** Persons should not share straws, cups, glasses, water bottles, used during sports or recreation, cigarettes, etc.
- **Stay home if you or your child is sick** until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications). Keeping individuals with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick.**
- **Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children in the household** by checking for fever and other symptoms of flu.

For more influenza information and updates, please visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ or www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDCINFO. For materials in Spanish, please visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/espanol/. You may also visit the DuPage County Health Department Emergency Information webpage at www.protectdupage.org. For general questions about influenza, please call the DuPage County Health Department Hotline at 630-221-7600.

Sincerely,

THE DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday

H1N1.09.56