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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

December 7, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stay Healthy for the Holidays—Get Your Flu Shot

DuPage County— The DuPage County Health Department is promoting Vaccinate Illinois Week, also observed as National Influenza Vaccination Week, from December 6-12, 2020. Since COVID-19 and flu could spread simultaneously this winter, DuPage County residents are reminded that yearly influenza (flu) vaccination is recommended for anyone 6 months and older and there’s still time to get vaccinated. An annual flu vaccine is the best protection against this potentially serious disease.

“We continue to remind residents that there’s still time to get their flu vaccine. We don’t know what this flu season will bring, but we do know that flu vaccination can reduce the risk of becoming infected with flu. As part of our preparedness strategy, we are striving to significantly reduce the prevalence of flu this winter,” said Karen Ayala, Executive Director of DuPage County Health Department.

For millions of people, the flu presents a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, fatigue, and miserable days spent in bed. Every year, flu is responsible for millions of illnesses, tens of thousands of hospitalizations, and thousands of deaths. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctor visits, missed work, and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths. If you do get sick, the flu vaccine may also help reduce the severity of illness and prevent serious health complications.

Getting vaccinated yourself protects people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain chronic health conditions. People at high risk include pregnant women and women up to 2 weeks after the end of pregnancy, children younger than 5 years of age, people 65 years of age and older, and people are immunocompromised or who have certain long-term medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease.

-More-

**STAY SAFE
DUPAGE**



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While seasonal flu outbreaks can happen as early as October, flu activity is usually highest between December and February, though activity can last as late as May. As long as flu viruses are circulating, it's not too late to get vaccinated. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect against influenza virus infection. Flu vaccination is now widely available at doctors' offices and retail pharmacies.

In addition to getting a flu shot, take everyday preventive actions to protect yourself and others from influenza and COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Wear a mask whenever outside your home or with anyone not from your household;
- Watch your distance, staying at least 6 feet from people outside of your immediate household and avoid in-person gatherings; and
- Stay home if you are experiencing flu-like or COVID-like symptoms and contact your healthcare provider for appropriate evaluation, testing, and care.

Influenza antiviral drugs can be a second line of defense for treatment of some who get sick with flu and can lessen the severity and duration of symptoms. Antiviral drugs can also prevent serious flu complications, like pneumonia. For people at high risk of serious flu complications, check with your healthcare provider since prompt treatment with an antiviral drug can mean the difference between having a milder illness versus a very serious, prolonged illness with complications.

To increase accessibility to all DuPage County residents, the DuPage Health Coalition (DHC) is offering free flu shots to low-income, uninsured residents of DuPage County. In addition to the flu vaccine voucher program, several local Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are also offering flu vaccines to their uninsured patients. To learn more or request a voucher, visit accessdupage.org/flu.

It's not too late to get a flu vaccine to help protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu. Use the [HealthMap Vaccine Finder](#) to find a location that offers the flu vaccine. More information on influenza prevention is available at www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm.

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