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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.

September 26, 2022
For Immediate Release

DuPage County Drops to “Low” Community Level Vaccination Urged to Improve Protection

DuPage County – This week, reported COVID-19 cases and related hospitalizations continue to show overall decreases across DuPage County. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) moved DuPage County into “Low” Community Level Thursday (9/22/22) with the average rate of new COVID-19 infections falling below the threshold of 200 per 100,000 residents over the last 7 days, in addition to a continued slower pace of new COVID-19 hospital admissions of less than 10 per 100,000 residents over the last 7 days. As of September 22, 2022, DuPage County is reporting 117 cases per 100,000 residents in the last 7 days.

According to the CDC, in DuPage County, nearly 78% of residents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and 60% of the fully vaccinated population has received a first booster dose. Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) vaccination data show 77% of youth aged 12-17 years are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and only 54% of children aged 5-11 years are fully vaccinated in DuPage County. Concerningly, even lower rates of all age groups are currently up to date with COVID-19 vaccination. Low vaccination rates continue to increase the risk of preventable infection, which have been shown to contribute to severe illness, hospitalization, and death, as well as COVID-19 spread in households, schools, gatherings, and communities.

“Colder weather is approaching, and residents will spend more time indoors, which is generally when respiratory virus infections such as COVID-19 and flu increase,” said Karen Ayala, Executive Director, DuPage County Health Department (DCHD). “It’s important to take precautions to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community from getting sick by staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and making sure you get your flu shot.”

This fall, all residents aged 6 months and older should get both an annual flu shot and be up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. For residents aged 12 years and up, especially those who are 50 years and older, have underlying medical conditions, and/or have household members at high risk, this includes getting the newly updated COVID-19 vaccine, known as a bivalent booster. The bivalent booster is the first update to the original COVID-19 vaccine, designed to better protect against the dominant Omicron subvariants BA.4/BA.5.

All residents 12 and older who have completed a primary vaccine series are eligible to get the new bivalent booster vaccine two months after their most recent vaccine or booster.

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DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) reminds residents that we have the tools to stay healthy, especially as more indoor gatherings are likely as we experience cooler temperatures.

Residents are encouraged to:

- **Stay up to date** with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. Although vaccinated people sometimes get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccines significantly lowers the risk of getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying from COVID-19.
- **Get a flu shot** before Halloween, October 31st.
- **Wear the most protective mask you can** that fits well and that you will wear consistently. Wear a high filtration mask indoors if you are at high risk for severe illness. Examples of high filtration masks include N95, KN95, and KN94 masks.
- **Stay home and get tested if you have symptoms.**
- **If you test positive for COVID-19, isolate at home** and away from others for at least 5 days and talk to your doctor about treatment options right away.
- **Wash your hands often** or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

Individuals seeking an appointment for a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine and flu shot can visit www.vaccines.gov to identify a provider near them or contact their primary healthcare provider. For DCHD clinic appointments for COVID-19 vaccination or community opportunities to offer vaccination, visit www.dupagehealth.org/667/COVID-19-Vaccine.

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