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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.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

It's Time for Your Annual Flu Shot

DUPAGE COUNTY—Influenza (flu) season in Illinois typically starts in October and the DuPage County Health Department 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 vaccine given by jet injector. There are also high-dose vaccines for people age 65 and older and recombinant (egg-free) vaccines. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that manufacturers are making as many as 151 million to 166 million doses of injectable flu vaccine (i.e., inactivated and recombinant flu vaccines) for the 2017-2018 season.

Flu season can last as late as May. Flu causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands or sometimes tens of thousands of deaths. Flu hit children hard last season with 107 lab-confirmed influenza-associated pediatric deaths reported nationally, a number that is known to be an underestimate of the true number of these deaths.

-More-

-Page 2-

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.

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