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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.

January 4, 2023
For Immediate Release

DuPage County Health Department Reports County's First Pediatric Influenza-associated Death of 2022-2023 Flu Season

DuPage County – The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) has learned that an adolescent in DuPage County has died from complications of influenza (flu) during the [week ending December 24, 2022](#). This is the first reported pediatric flu death this season in DuPage County, and the third reported pediatric flu death in [Illinois](#) this season; 61 influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been reported this season [nationally](#). This is the first pediatric flu death in DuPage County since the 2018-2019 season. To protect confidentiality and privacy, additional information on this case will not be made public.

Since October 2022, we have seen early, and rapidly increasing flu activity locally compared to past seasons. Although seasonal flu activity continues to decline in most areas, spread and hospitalizations related to respiratory illnesses (including influenza) remain moderate to high, locally and nationally.

“We are deeply saddened to hear of this tragic death from influenza. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the child’s family,” said Karen Ayala, Executive Director of the DuPage County Health Department. “Flu can seriously impact children and adolescents and can be especially hard on people of any age with underlying medical conditions, pregnant people, and people 65 years and older. Because flu activity is expected to remain elevated for several months, now is still a good time for children and adults to get an annual flu vaccine if not already vaccinated, and to take steps to protect those who may be at higher risk, including staying away from others when we are ill. It is not too late to get your annual flu vaccine, to help prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and death related to flu.”

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older receive an annual flu vaccine. Vaccination is especially important for certain people who are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications or who are in close contact with people at higher risk. This includes children at higher risk of developing serious complications from flu illness, and adults who are close contacts of those children. However, two-thirds of DuPage County residents with influenza who were admitted to the intensive care unit were not vaccinated this season so far.

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Close monitoring as well as timely evaluation and antiviral treatment by a healthcare provider are also important. CDC issued [Interim Guidance for Clinicians to Prioritize Antiviral Treatment of Influenza in the Setting of Reduced Availability of Oseltamivir](#) through the Health Alert Network (HAN) on December 15, 2022.

Opportunities to get flu vaccines are available in and around DuPage County through pharmacies and medical providers—visit www.vaccines.gov to find a location near you.

To help improve access, DuPage Health Coalition is offering free flu vaccine vouchers to uninsured DuPage County residents whose financial circumstances make it difficult to get their annual flu shot. More information is available at <https://accessdupage.org/flu/>

There are many ways your actions can help protect you, your household, and your community from severe illness related to respiratory viruses. DCHD reminds residents to stop the spread of germs and increase your protection by:

- Staying home if you are sick and being in touch with your healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment, if symptoms persist or worsen.
- Getting your flu vaccine every year.
- Getting your COVID-19 vaccine and staying [up to date](#) with recommended boosters.
- Avoiding close contact with anyone who is sick or has symptoms.
- Wearing a snug-fitting, high-quality mask that covers your nose and chin in indoor public places. KN95 or N95 masks provide more protection than cloth or surgical masks.
- Opening windows to improve airflow when weather permits or using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaners.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces, such as doorknobs, light switches, mobile devices, remotes, and countertops, daily.
- And taking care of yourself:
 - Take breaks to unwind.
 - Take care of your body and stay active.
 - Eat healthy foods and get enough sleep.

These steps will help prevent the flu and other respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and RSV.

Up-to-date information about the current flu season in DuPage County can be found In [DCHD's Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report](#).

The Illinois Department of Public Health provides a statewide [2022-2023 flu activity report](#), and CDC's weekly influenza surveillance report is accessible [here](#).

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