



## Press Release

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## Influenza-like illness increasing in suburban Cook County

Cook County Department of Public Health Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Terry Mason is reminding residents about the importance of getting a flu shot as reports of influenza-like illness (ILI) increase throughout suburban Cook County.

Influenza and ILI are viruses that affect the respiratory system and are easily spread from person to person primarily when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and fatigue.

“We have seen a 32% increase in the last week in people seeking care for ILI in emergency departments and a higher number of school reporting increases in absenteeism in schools due to ILI in the past two weeks,” said Mason who recommends everyone six months of age and older get a flu vaccine and people with flu symptoms stay home 24 hours after the fever is gone (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine) to help curb the spread of illness.

In addition to getting vaccinated, residents should practice the three C’s to help reduce the spread of illness.

- **Clean** – properly wash your hands frequently
- **Cover** – cover your cough and sneeze
- **Contain** – contain your germs by staying home if you are sick

Residents in suburban Cook County should contact their family doctor or visit their local pharmacist to receive a vaccine. The 2014-2015 flu vaccine will protect against three influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during this season: influenza A (H1N1) virus, influenza A (H3N2) virus and influenza B virus.

For more information about current influenza surveillance, or to use the Flu Vaccine Finder, visit <http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org>.

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