



Press Release

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Stay healthy this flu season by getting a flu shot.

Seasonal influenza, or flu, is a contagious respiratory virus that can cause mild to severe illness. The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and Cook County Health & Hospitals System (CCHHS) recommend everyone six months of age and older receive a flu shot.

“Don’t wait to vaccinate,” said CCDPH COO Dr. Terry Mason. “Getting a flu shot or nasal-spray flu vaccine is the most effective way to protect against the flu virus. Get it now and be protected for the whole flu season; which typically starts in October and runs through about May.”

Flu is a virus that affects the respiratory system and is spread primarily when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms of the flu virus include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and fatigue. While the flu can be particularly dangerous to the elderly or people with chronic illness who can’t fight the debilitating effects of the virus, anyone can get the flu.

“It is difficult to predict what a flu season will be like, but we do know that yearly flu vaccines for everyone 6 months of age and older can help protect us against the flu virus,” said Dr. Sharon Welbel, CCHHS Director of Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control. “While there is always a lot of attention on infectious diseases like Ebola and measles, influenza affects more people and can result in potentially life threatening symptoms.”

In addition to getting vaccinated, residents should practice the three C’s to limit the spread of any illness:

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

The 2015-2016 influenza vaccine is made to protect against the three (trivalent vaccine) or four (quadrivalent vaccine) viruses research indicates will be most common this year. Trivalent vaccine protects against two influenza A viruses (an H1N1 and an H3N2) and an influenza B virus. Quadrivalent vaccine protects against the same viruses as the trivalent vaccine and an additional B virus. For more information about flu vaccine types, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm.

For flu vaccine, contact your primary care provider, local pharmacy, Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) hospitals and health centers at www.cookcountyhhs.org/locations/ or use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Vaccine Finder at cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/flu. Watch for CCDPH seasonal influenza updates on our website at cookcountypublichealth.org, Facebook (facebook.com/ccdph) and Twitter (twitter.com/cookcohealth).

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