Hendricks County Health Department

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 10, 2018

CONTACT: Chase Cotten
(317) 745-9618

5 MOST IMPORTANT STEPS TO PREVENT GETTING THE FLU THIS FALL
Hendricks County public health officials encourage residents
that it's never too soon to prepare for flu season.

HENDRICKS COUNTY, IN – Even though the "chill in the air" has not arrived yet, flu season will be here before we know it. Beginning in early October and ending in late March, flu season does not have to be severe if residents take the five precautions outlined here seriously.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza or "flu" is a "contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death."

"Symptoms of flu often include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting," states Dr. David Stopperich, MD, Health Officer for Hendricks County. "If you are experiencing these symptoms, it is important that you call your family doctor or another provider as soon as possible."

Unfortunately, the flu is very contagious and easy to pass from person to person. Most medical experts agree that the virus is primarily passed through tiny water droplets from sneezing, coughing, skin-to-skin contact, or contact with unwashed surfaces. Sometimes, flu can even be passed by an infected person before he or she experiences symptoms. In 2017, around 1,079 individuals from Hendricks County were treated at an emergency department for flu-like symptoms. Tragically, seven vulnerable individuals from Hendricks County lost their lives due to confirmed influenza.

"Residents who are most vulnerable to danger if they get the flu are newborns, young children under the age of 5, pregnant women, people who are 65 or older, and people who have certain medical conditions such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes," reports Kandi Jamison, Director of Public Health Nursing for the Hendricks County Health Department. "This is in part because some of these vulnerable residents cannot safely receive a flu vaccination or simply choose not to."

So, it is up to the rest of us to take these five steps to prevent getting or giving the flu this fall:

1. **Get your flu shot!** This is the easiest and best way for you to prevent getting or giving the flu. "Your family doctor and almost all local pharmacies in Hendricks County will offer flu shots this fall, including Kroger, CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Various Immediate/Urgent Care Centers, Meijer, and Target" continues Jamison. "The Hendricks County Health Department also offers the vaccine to both uninsured and insured adults and children. If you can, you should definitely get your flu shot, because this protects others around you who are more vulnerable or may not be able to receive a flu shot – we call this concept 'herd immunity' – if the majority of the herd is vaccinated, the most vulnerable in the herd are protected."

Hendricks County Health Department

Environmental Health
355 South Washington Street, G30
Danville, IN 46122
Phone   (317) 745-9217
Fax   (317) 745-9218

Nursing
355 South Washington Street, G40
Danville, IN 46122
Phone   (317) 745-9222
Fax   (317) 745-9383

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The Health Department's walk-in flu clinic is open every Wednesday during flu season starting October 3rd, from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. at their Public Health Nursing Clinic in the Hendricks County Government Center, 355 S. Washington St., Danville. For more information about the clinic, insurance coverage, or cost of the vaccine, please call (317) 745-9222.

2. **If you have a cough or sneeze, cover it.** When possible, cough and sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow instead of your hands. Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

3. **Frequently wash your hands with hot soapy water**. Washing should take about 20 seconds. Wash before eating; after using the bathroom; after touching heavily-used objects like door knobs and key boards; before giving care to someone; after caring for someone who is sick; and especially after coughing or sneezing.

4. **Routinely clean surfaces that are frequently touched in your home and workplace.** This includes desks, doorknobs, mobile devices, countertops, steering wheel of car, etc. The flu virus can "live" on some surfaces for up to 24 hours. Common household cleaning products can kill the flu virus, including products containing chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), or alcohols.

5. **Stay home from work, school, and other activities when you are showing symptoms of the flu.** It is much better to be safe than sorry; plus, nobody wants your germs. Visit your doctor as soon as possible after becoming ill to be tested for the flu. If it is not the flu, your doctor can provide other treatment to get well. Antibiotics will not cure the flu, but there are other prescription medications that can help reduce and relieve symptoms.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone over the age of 6 months old should get a flu shot. Anyone who has an allergy to eggs or any other ingredient in the vaccine, as well as anyone who has ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome, should talk to their doctor before getting the vaccine, as there are now alternative vaccines available for patients with certain conditions.

For more information about the flu, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm.

For more information about the flu or local vaccine providers, contact the Hendricks County Health Department Public Health Nursing Division at (317) 745-9222 or visit their website at www.co.hendricks.in.us/health.