



Genesee County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: October 22, 2015 **END DATE:** March 30, 2016
CONTACT: Christine Rygiel, MPH, MB (ASCP)
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RE: Flu Season is Here-Protect Yourself

Flu season has arrived early! Genesee County has already seen its presence this season. Influenza (the flu) is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by influenza viruses. Symptoms of the flu include: cough, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, body aches and fever. It is time to get vaccinated against the flu. The flu vaccine is widely available in Genesee County. The best way to prevent getting the flu is to get vaccinated. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get vaccinated against the flu each year. Vaccination is especially important for those who are at high risk for serious flu complications, including young children, pregnant women, people 65 years old and older, and people of any age with certain chronic health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease). Remember, once you have received the flu vaccine, it takes about two weeks before the vaccine provides its optimal protective benefit.

You can also protect yourself and others from the flu by washing your hands often with soap and water, and covering your coughs and sneezes. Most importantly, those who are sick should stay home. If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can make the illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. Antiviral drugs work best when started in the first 2 days of symptoms. If you are at high risk of flu complications, consult your family physician.

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People infected with flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to about 5-7 days after getting sick. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems. This means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as, while you are sick.

CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick. Continue to cover coughs and sneezes and wash hands even after you return to work. It is important to know that even if you don't have a fever, you may have the flu and be contagious if you get flu symptoms.

Most people recover from the flu at home without medical assistance. If your symptoms persist or are severe, consult your healthcare provider. If the following warning signs are present, seek prompt medical attention:

Emergency Warning Signs In Children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In Adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

The Genesee County Health Department wants you to stay healthy this flu season. Visit our website at www.gchd.us or visit www.fluig.org for more flu resources and information. If you have not yet received your flu shot, we encourage you to get one. To find a flu clinic near you go to www.flu.gov or talk to your healthcare provider. Our motto is **“Better Life Through Better Health.”**

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