

DEKALB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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TO: DeKalb County News Media
FROM: Karen Grush, Public Health Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEKALB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES 2009 SEASONAL FLU CLINICS

The DeKalb County Health Department will be offering seasonal flu shots for the 2009 flu season.

Walk-in clinics for the seasonal flu vaccine for DeKalb County residents 19 years of age and older will be held on Thursdays starting September 17, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. On September 24, 2009, and October 8, 2009, the clinic will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

The Health Department will also be offering clinics at the following community sites:

- Friday, October 2, 2009, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Resource Bank located at 310 S. Highway 23 in Genoa; and
- Monday, October 5, 2009, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Fox Valley Older Adult Center located at 1406 Suydam Road in Sandwich.

Pediatric seasonal flu shots will not be given at these community sites.

Seasonal flu shots for children six (6) months through 18 years of age will be given at the Health Department on Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. starting September 24, 2009. On October 8, 2009, the clinic will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. No appointment is necessary. A parent or guardian must accompany individuals under the age of 18.

According to Karen Grush, DeKalb County Health Department public health administrator, an estimated 36,000 Americans die and 200,000 are hospitalized due to seasonal influenza (flu) every year. "Seasonal flu is a virus that causes a respiratory illness. Compared to most viruses that cause upper respiratory illnesses, such as the common cold, seasonal influenza can cause more severe illness and lead to more serious medical complications, such as pneumonia," states Grush.

Individuals are most contagious from two days before the symptoms appear up until about five days after they appear. Young children can be infectious for 10 days or more. Seasonal flu symptoms typically last five to seven days, but can continue several weeks, especially the cough. Even after the symptoms are gone, some seasonal flu victims have a weak, run-down feeling for weeks.

Unfortunately, as with other viral diseases, antibiotics are not effective in treating seasonal flu. Most healthy adults and children will recover as long as they get plenty of rest and drink fluids. Normal recovery takes up to seven to ten days. "Seasonal influenza vaccination is the best way to prevent seasonal influenza and its severe complications," said Grush. "Although the vaccine is not 100 percent effective in preventing seasonal flu, it is very effective in reducing the severity of symptoms and preventing seasonal flu-related deaths."

Although anyone who wishes to avoid the flu can be vaccinated, the CDC strongly recommends seasonal influenza vaccination, as soon as the vaccine is available, to any person who is at increased risk for complications from the seasonal flu. Those at highest risk for complications from influenza include:

- People 50 years of age and older
- All women that will be pregnant during flu season
- Persons with chronic, long-term health problems
- Persons who live with or care for persons at high risk for influenza-related complications
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Children aged 6 months to 5 years
- Healthcare workers
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children under 6 months of age.

The CDC recommends all children aged 6 months through 18 years should be vaccinated against influenza annually. In addition to children and individuals at risk, seasonal flu shots can also be advantageous for healthy adults who would like to reduce their chances of getting seasonal flu. Studies have shown that when healthy working adults receive a seasonal flu shot, it can result in decreased missed days of work and decreased use of health-care resources, including use of antibiotics. The flu season usually runs from November until April and often peaks between January and March.

Seasonal flu shots will not be given to individuals who are allergic to eggs, and who report history of previous adverse reactions after getting influenza vaccine.

There will be a \$37 charge for the seasonal flu shot. Payment can be made by cash or check. We also accept all major credit cards with photo identification the walk-in clinics held at the Health Department only. Medicare and Medicaid will be billed. Please bring your Medicare or Medicaid card with you to the clinic along with photo identification.

The State Immunization Program will be providing flu vaccine to be used for Vaccines for Children (VFC)-eligible children, ages 6 months through 18 years, at a substantial cost savings. Vaccine from the State program will be available to children, only on-site, at the DeKalb County Health Department at a cost of \$10. Individuals under the age of 18 years must be accompanied by an adult.

The seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to provide protection against novel H1N1 influenza (also known as the swine flu). However, H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and is expected to be available in mid-October at the soonest. The H1N1 flu vaccine will only prevent H1N1 virus infections, not seasonal influenza, and will be available to specific target groups.

Flu prevention information will be available on our Flu Information Hotline at 815-748-2410. Information and updates can also be obtained by accessing our web site at www.dekalbcounty.org and going to the "Hot Topics" link. Information is also available at the Centers for Disease Control web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>.