

DeKalb County Health Department

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FROM: Karen Grush
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Public Health
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Local Health Department Administrator joins State's Top Doc in Promoting Flu Prevention

All Illinoisans Share the Responsibility of Reducing Illness Due to Flu

Karen Grush joins with other regional public health administrators to support the Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Damon T. Arnold message to Illinoisans to get a seasonal flu shot. Ms Grush is the Public Health Administrator at the DeKalb County Health Department.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) anticipates more people getting sick with the flu this year because the seasonal flu and the new H1N1 flu strain will be circulating at the same time.

The DeKalb County Health Department has been preparing for the potential of increased illness this flu season because of the additional, new flu strain," Grush said. "Staying healthy this flu season is going to be a shared responsibility – one that requires all of us to take action, like getting a flu shot."

Each year an estimated five to 20 percent of the U.S. population gets the flu. Approximately 200,000 people are hospitalized with complications from the flu and about 36,000 die annually. Flu symptoms include a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above, cough, sore throat, headache, body aches, fatigue, and chills.

"The best way to protect yourself and your family against the flu is to get a flu shot every year," Grush said. "Everyone should also make sure they practice good health hygiene by following the 3 Cs - Clean – wash your hands frequently and properly to prevent the spread of germs; Cover – your cough and sneeze with a tissue or sleeve; and Contain – contain your germs by staying home when you are sick."

(MORE)

Health Department Administrator joins State's Top Doc in Promoting Flu Prevention - page 2

The flu is spread through coughing or sneezing. People can also get the flu by touching objects carrying the virus, such as telephones and door knobs, and then touching their mouth or nose.

Young children, people with chronic medical conditions and the elderly are at higher risk of complications from seasonal flu and it is critical they get a seasonal flu shot. However, with the H1N1 flu circulating simultaneously, Dr. Arnold has been traveling throughout the state to encourage all Illinoisans, except those with contraindications to the vaccine, to get a seasonal flu shot this year.

Some people may experience mild symptoms for a few days after being vaccinated and soreness at the injection site. However, a person does not contract the flu from getting a flu shot.

The seasonal flu shot does not protect against H1N1. The CDC is developing a vaccine for H1N1 flu, which is separate from the seasonal flu vaccine. Initial shipments of H1N1 vaccine are expected to be available in mid-October. The H1N1 vaccine is intended to be used in addition to seasonal flu vaccine. For more information log onto www.dekalbcountyhealthdepartment.org, www.ready.illinois.gov and www.flu.gov.



Karen Grush (second from left) joins Dr. Damond Arnold (front center) and public health administrators from north western Illinois at a recent press conference.