

MILLS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Keep the Holidays Healthy

Annual flu vaccination protects yourself and loved ones

Iowa recorded its first confirmed case of seasonal influenza two weeks ago and the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network has noted increased flu activity since then. Mills County Public Health reminds residents that an annual flu vaccination is the best way to protect them and their loved ones from the flu.

“Getting the flu vaccine now will ensure protection over the holidays,” said Director of Nurses, Ann Pavkov, RN, BSN. “As people gather together for holiday meals and parties, they’re more likely to spread illness around. Receiving the flu vaccine will help you stay healthy to enjoy all the festivities, and will also keep you from making others sick.”

This is especially important during family gatherings that infants, those with chronic diseases, or elderly individuals might attend. Infants younger than 6 months of age are not old enough to receive the influenza vaccine, so they are at a higher risk of catching the flu from someone else and they have the highest chance of being hospitalized if they get ill. If you are ill with flu-like symptoms during the holidays, you need to stay home and away from others.

The flu vaccine is plentiful, widely available, and is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. While the flu vaccine is the best defense against getting influenza, it’s also important to take personal actions to help prevent the spread of illness. Remember the 3Cs: Cover your coughs and sneezes; Clean your hands frequently; and Contain germs by staying home when ill.

The flu is a respiratory illness caused by viruses. It spreads easily from person to person and can cause mild to severe illness. The flu comes on suddenly and symptoms may include fever, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, and body aches. Illness typically lasts two to seven days. Influenza may cause severe illness or complications in people such as the very young or very old, or those who have underlying health conditions.

Additional Flu Clinics have been scheduled at Mills County Public Health on the following dates: Dec. 1st, 9-11 a.m.; Dec. 6th, 1-4:30 p.m.; Dec. 8th, 9-11 a.m.; Dec. 13th, 9-11 a.m. Contact us at 527-9699 for more clinic opportunities. More information about influenza can be found at www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx.