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This holiday season, don't give or get the gift of influenza; get vaccinated

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- December 5-11 is National Influenza Vaccination Week; an ideal time before the hustle and bustle of the holiday season to get your family vaccinated against influenza, if you haven't already done so.

With the holidays right around the corner, the last thing most people want to deal with is getting sick, especially with influenza. Flu sufferers can find themselves confined to bed for up to one week with high fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches. For most people, the only thing worse than being miserable themselves is passing the illness to friends and family; but it happens more often than we realize. Studies show that one person infected with the flu can potentially infect up to 15 others, making holiday parties and family gatherings the perfect venue for spreading influenza, if those in attendance haven't been vaccinated.

Why chance ruining your holiday celebration? The best way to prevent the flu and its potentially life-threatening complications is for everyone, including healthy people, age six months and older, to get vaccinated. For those at high-risk for developing serious flu complications, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, vaccination is especially important.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) would like to urge citizens of the district not to take the flu lightly. Influenza continues to be a serious, unpredictable threat that can turn deadly.

Influenza illness has started to increase, with peak flu season just ahead (January through March). With vaccine in plentiful supply, now is a great time to get vaccinated. The 2010-2011 flu vaccine protects against three different types of flu viruses: H3N2, influenza B, and H1N1. It is effective through the entire flu season and is being shown to be a good match for the flu that is currently circulating.

If you have not yet received your flu shot, please call MMDHD at 989-224-2195 in Clinton County, 989-875-3681 in Gratiot County, or 989-831-5237 in Montcalm County to make an appointment. The cost is \$30 per shot and Medicaid and Medicare Part B are accepted. Please be aware that MMDHD has a limited number of influenza doses available to those without insurance. Those with insurance that covers the cost of immunizations should first contact their physician.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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