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This year it's more important than ever to get your flu shot

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- As we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) reminds the public that the flu season is upon us and that the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu is to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 and influenza are likely to collide in the coming months, making it more important than ever to do what we can to stay healthy and protect ourselves from preventable illnesses. That is why the MMDHD is urging everyone over six months of age to get vaccinated against the flu.

Vaccination is especially important for those at high-risk for developing serious flu complications. Those most at-risk include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.

Anyone who has had influenza knows it can make you quite miserable and put you out of commission for up to a week with a high fever, chills, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches. While the flu vaccine is not 100% effective, it remains our best defense and can reduce the severity of symptoms if you do get sick.

The vaccine is effective throughout the entire flu season, which can last as late as May. It does take up to two weeks for the body to build up defenses against the virus after being vaccinated, so it is best not to wait.

The vaccine is available at a variety of places, including your doctor's office, many pharmacies, or at your local health department.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department offers the standard flu shot, the high-dose flu shot for those 65 and older, and preservative-free options. The health department participates with the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program and can bill many types of insurance, including Medicare Part B, which will cover the entire cost for seniors. Adults with no insurance may still be able to be vaccinated, with the cost based on income.

To schedule an appointment at MMDHD, or to find out if we participate with your insurance, call 989-224-2195 in Clinton County, 989-875-3681 in Gratiot County and 989-831-5237 in Montcalm County.

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2- Get your flu shot

In addition to getting vaccinated, there are many other ways you can protect yourself and your family from getting sick from the flu and other illnesses. First, wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. Make sure to clean common surfaces and objects often that may be contaminated with germs. You should also try to avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. If you know someone who is sick, avoid close contact with them.

If you do get the flu, call your doctor if your symptoms get worse or if you have shortness of breath or worsening cough or congestion. Also, be sure to cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and be sure to stay home so you do not infect others.

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*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.
We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.
Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes*