



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **The Illinois Department of Public Health Releases Tips for Staying Healthy during Flu Season**

*All Illinoisans six months and older should get vaccinated*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Every year the flu sickens millions of Americans, hospitalizes hundreds of thousands, and kills tens of thousands. Catching the flu can be as easy as standing in line next to someone who has flu symptoms. Fortunately, protecting yourself against the flu is easy. Getting vaccinated is the single best way to prevent getting sick with the flu. To avoid infection, you should also wash your hands frequently and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

“Getting sick with the flu may not be that bad for you, but for others, it can mean weeks of illness and in the worst cases, death,” said Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “We have a responsibility to protect those who can’t protect themselves because they are under six months of age or have chronic health problems like cancer or heart disease. If you get the flu vaccine and don’t get sick, you help protect Illinoisans who are not able to be vaccinated.”

Everyone six months of age and older should get the seasonal flu vaccine. The vaccine is available in either a flu shot, or in a nasal spray. Talk with a health care provider about what type is most appropriate for you.

In addition to getting your flu vaccine, IDPH recommends following the 3 C’s: clean, cover, and contain.

- **Clean** – clean your hands frequently by washing your hands with soap and warm water.
- **Cover** – cover your cough and sneeze.
- **Contain** – contain your germs by staying home if you are sick.

Flu viruses spread when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. Flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of the following symptoms:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| - fever or feeling feverish/chills | - headaches   |
| - cough                            | - fatigue (tiredness)   |
| - runny or stuffy nose             | - vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults) |
| - muscle or body aches             |   |

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Influenza antiviral drugs can be a second line of defense for people who get sick with the flu. Many studies have found that in addition to lessening the duration and severity of symptoms, antiviral drugs can prevent flu complications.

To find a location to get a flu shot in your community, check with your health care provider or local health department. You can also use the online [Vaccine Finder](#). More information about [influenza](#) can be found on the IDPH website at [www.dph.illinois.gov](http://www.dph.illinois.gov).

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