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PRESS RELEASE

Iroquois County Public Health Department Encourages Flu Vaccinations

Iroquois County -The Iroquois County Public Health Department (ICPHD) will be offering flu vaccinations by appointment beginning September 28, 2020.

In order to make the experience as safe as possible, people are encouraged to call for an appointment. Risk of exposure to others can be reduced if those wishing to receive the vaccine can come in at a scheduled time.

In order to avoid large gatherings of people at one place, the health department will not be offering public flu clinics this year.

“The CDC and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) are strongly advising vaccinations for everyone 6 months of age or older,” said Vonda Pruitt, RN, Director of Nursing for the health department.

“We look forward to providing flu vaccines for children and adults by scheduling an appointment at our office.” Another important note, according to Pruitt, is that children age 8 and under may require 2 vaccinations at least one month apart to achieve immunity. Also, a physician’s order is required prior to giving a vaccination to a pregnant or breastfeeding woman.

Dee Ann Schippert, the health department administrator, said there is still a small percentage of the population that believes you can get the flu from the flu shot. “There is no live virus in the flu vaccines we provide. The vaccines we utilize today are approved by the Food and Drug Administration and are very safe. It takes up to 2 weeks for protection to develop after the shot and there is the rare occasion when a person will become ill during that period of time. The illness is not from the flu vaccine. The person either had contracted the flu virus prior to achieving immunity or is suffering from another illness having the same or similar symptoms as the flu.” Mrs. Schippert also noted that the flu vaccine is a quadrivalent vaccine which offers protection against four different strains of flu; is preservative free, containing no Thimerosal or Mercury; and will be administered using syringes that are latex free. The cost for the quadrivalent vaccine is \$35 per dose.

In addition to the quadrivalent flu vaccine, the health department will also be offering the high dose flu vaccine. The high dose flu vaccine is recommended for ages 65 and over and will cost \$70 per dose. If you have coverage for the flu vaccine through Medicare or one of the following listed insurance companies, the Iroquois County Public Health Department can bill them directly. ICPHD can currently bill Aetna, BlueCross/Blue Shield of IL PPO, Health Alliance, HealthLink PPO, HealthLink HMO, Cigna and United Healthcare. A receipt will be provided to enable those with other insurance coverage to obtain reimbursement.

Please call the health department at 815-432-2483 to schedule an appointment. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except for holidays and is located at 1001 E. Grant St., Watseka, Illinois.