



Lake County

Health Department and
Community Health Center

PREVENTING THE FLU

Current Information
2004 - 2005

Flu Hotline

(847) 377-8470 (recorded message)

www.co.lake.il.us/health

WHO SHOULD GET THE AVAILABLE FLU VACCINE?

Due to a nationwide shortage of available flu vaccine this year, the following priority groups are recommended to get a flu shot this season:

- Children 6 - 23 months of age.
- Adults 65 years of age and older.
- Persons 2 - 64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions.
- Pregnant women or women who will be pregnant during the flu season.
- Residents of nursing homes/long-term care facilities.
- Children 6 months to 18 years receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Health care workers providing direct patient care.
- Caregivers and household contacts of children less than 6 months.

Persons in groups identified above should search locally for vaccine if their regular health care provider does not have vaccine available.

Persons who are not included in one of the priority groups described above are asked to defer or perhaps forego getting a flu shot.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP PREVENT CATCHING THE FLU?

There are several basic steps you can take to help avoid catching the flu:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based handrub.
- Maintain a strong immune system by getting plenty of sleep, eating well and drinking lots of liquids.
- Health care workers and caregivers are encouraged to use a nasal mist known as FluMist, which can be given to healthy individuals 5 to 49 years of age. However, direct care workers who care for immunocompromised patients in special care units should not get this alternative protection.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET THE FLU?

There is no cure for the flu, but antiviral treatment may lessen symptoms if started soon enough. If symptoms are severe, hospitalization may be required.

- Call your doctor within 24 hours of starting symptoms.
- Stay home for 5 - 7 days after symptoms begin. Children should be kept home at least one week after symptoms begin.
- Take over-the-counter medications for symptom relief. Children and teens should not take aspirin.

HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE FLU?

The flu is spread when a person who has the flu coughs, sneezes or speaks and sends the flu virus into the air and other people inhale the virus. It can be spread when a person touches a surface that has the flu virus on it.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based handrub.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of immediately.
- Remind other people to cover their mouths and use disposable tissues when coughing or sneezing.

"Assuring a healthy community."