



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Health to Offer Special Flu Shot Clinic for Children
Flu Shots Are Recommended for Children Six Months to 59 Months of Age
And Those With Chronic Illnesses

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Division of Maternal & Child Health Management will hold a pediatric flu shot clinic on Wednesday, November 29 from 3:30-7 p.m. This clinic will provide shots to any child 6 months of age and older, but will target children who are most at risk for complications due to flu infection.

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District has received a total of 400 doses of pediatric flu vaccine (200 infant doses and 200 pediatric doses). All of the flu shots for children are in single-dose vials, and contain no thimerosal (a preservative that contains mercury).

Thanks to the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, flu shots and other immunizations are free to children who are uninsured, underinsured, on Medicaid or participants in the Illinois All Kids health insurance program. Children who are American Indian or Alaskan Native are also eligible for the free vaccines. Public Health will charge a small shot administration fee (\$4 per flu shot). No one will be denied services due to an inability to pay this fee.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that healthy children aged 6 months up through their 5th birthday, their close contacts (people who live with them), and out-of-home caregivers (nannies, daycare providers, etc.) get a flu vaccine.

In addition, CDC also recommends influenza vaccination for any child from 6 months to 18 years of age with chronic health problems, including:

- * asthma or other problems of the lungs;
- * immune suppression;
- * chronic kidney disease;
- * heart disease;
- * HIV/AIDS;
- * diabetes;
- * sickle cell anemia; or
- * long-term aspirin therapy;
- * any condition that can compromise respiratory function.

Children less than 2 years old—even healthy children—are at high risk of ending up in the hospital if they get the flu. Vaccinating young children, their families, and other caregivers can help protect them from getting sick.

The flu shot is not approved for use in children less than 6 months old.

Children under 6 months old can also get very sick from the flu, but they are too young to get a flu vaccine. The best way to protect young children is to make sure that their household members and their caregivers are vaccinated.

Children 2-4 years old are likely to be taken to a doctor, an urgent care center, or the emergency room because of flu.

It is estimated that each year in the U.S., there are more than 20,000 children less than 5 years old hospitalized due to flu.

To protect their health, all children 6 months up until their 5th birthday should be vaccinated against the flu each year.

The best time to get vaccinated is October or November. Children six months to 9 years of age getting a flu shot for the first time will need two doses of vaccine the first year they are vaccinated. The second dose should be given 28 or more days after the first dose. The first dose “primes” the immune system; the second dose provides immune protection. It usually takes about two weeks after the second dose for protection to begin.

Because flu viruses change every year, the vaccine is updated annually. So even if you or your children got a flu shot last year, you both still need to get a flu shot this season to be protected. Flu season can occur anytime from November through April, so getting the vaccine in December or later still offers protection in most years.

No adult flu shot clinics are scheduled at this time at Public Health. See www.cuphd.org and click on “Flu Shots” for other local clinics and regular updates.

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