



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
February 15, 2008

**Contact:** Julie A. Pryde, Acting Public  
Health Administrator (217) 202-0657;  
Lori A. Holmes, Public Relations  
(217) 531-2927

## **Increased Seasonal Influenza Activity Reported in Illinois**

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Urges Citizens to Take Basic  
Precautions to Avoid Seasonal “Flu”*

Champaign, IL – Common, or seasonal influenza is an illness familiar to everyone. With increased seasonal flu activity reported in Illinois, the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) would like to urge citizens to take basic precautions to avoid contracting and spreading this illness.

Influenza is a respiratory illness with varying symptoms such as high fever, headache, extreme tiredness, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and body aches. Seasonal influenza is most predominate from October – May. Each year 5% to 20% of the population suffers from seasonal influenza. More than 200,000 people are hospitalized, and about 36,000 people die from influenza. Despite these facts, most people have some immunity to seasonal influenza, and by practicing healthy habits they can avoid becoming ill.

Basic tips for staying healthy and avoiding seasonal influenza include:

### **1. Get a flu vaccination -**

A flu vaccination is the single best way to prevent seasonal flu. October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but you can still get vaccinated at any point during the flu season.

### **2. Wash your hands -**

Keeping your hands clean is one of the best ways to keep from getting sick and spreading influenza. Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap, especially after coughing or sneezing. If warm water and soap is unavailable, the use of an alcohol-based sanitizer is recommended.

**3. Cover your cough -**

Influenza is an airborne contagion; therefore, it is important to cover coughs to avoid spreading the illness to others. Although most people utilize single-use tissues, it is actually better to cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Utilizing your sleeve inhibits the spread of germs through hand-to-hand or hand-to-surface contact.

**4. Do not contaminate -**

Remember that germs often reside on contact surfaces such as tables, door knobs, writing utensils, etc., and only need the opportunity to cause infection. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. These orifices are very susceptible to the spread of germs.

**5. Keep your distance -**

Avoid close contact with people experiencing symptoms of influenza. If you are ill, stay home to avoid spreading the illness to others.

**6. Maintain good health -**

You will be more susceptible to contracting influenza if you are not in good health. Get adequate sleep. Drink plenty of water and eat nutritionally balanced meals with fresh fruits and vegetables. Get regular exercise and attempt to manage stress. Being healthy helps protect you against influenza, or can help you overcome an existing infection without getting too sick. A strong healthy body is a strong defense against disease.

CUPHD currently has influenza planning resources available to the public on the web at [www.stock2forflu.com](http://www.stock2forflu.com) . Additional materials are available at the new CUPHD location at 201 West Kenyon Road in Champaign.

For more information on influenza planning or any other CUPHD program, please contact CUPHD at (217) 352-7961 or visit CUPHD on the web at [www.cuphd.org](http://www.cuphd.org) .

###