

# “Flu Season is Upon Us”

OTTAWA, IL – Flu season is upon us and the LaSalle County Health Department is urging everyone 6 months and older to get vaccinated against seasonal influenza (flu). If you haven't received a flu shot yet, it's not too late. While it's best to get vaccinated against the flu in October, you can still get a flu shot. Flu activity is usually highest between December and February, although activity can last as late as May. Flu symptoms can include fever or feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, tiredness, and some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

Flu is typically spread by droplets when someone with the flu talks, coughs, or sneezes. People can also get the flu by touching something, like a door handle, that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

On average, it's about two days after being exposed to the flu before symptoms begin. However, you can pass the flu to someone roughly a day before you start experiencing those symptoms, and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

To lessen your chances of developing the flu, adults and children need to practice good hygiene measures. Teach the importance of covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and educate children about hand to mucous membrane transmission. One of the best ways to protect yourself and your children is through frequent and thorough hand washing. People who are exhibiting “flu-like” symptoms should stay home from work, out of childcare and school to minimize transmission.

This is also a good time for certain individuals to get a pneumonia vaccination. People who should get a pneumonia shot include: persons aged 65 and older, adults and children with chronic illnesses such as heart, lung, kidney, or liver disease, Diabetics, all persons with a weakened immune system caused by conditions such as HIV, cancer, organ transplant, immunosuppressive medicine, splenectomy, or any other chronic condition.

For those under 65 with a chronic illness it is recommended that it be repeated once after five years. A pneumonia shot is usually necessary only once for those over the age of 65.

For more information on influenza you can call 1-815-433-3366 or you may visit our website at [www.lasallecounty.org/hd](http://www.lasallecounty.org/hd). Or like us on Facebook/Twitter.

