



NEWS



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McLean County Health Department to host community flu clinics in October

The annual flu shot protects you and your family by preventing the spread of illness in the community

BLOOMINGTON, IL— In order to help protect the community by preventing the spread of influenza (flu), the health department is utilizing a more consumer-friendly approach designed to bring services closer or directly to people. The public is invited to attend the McLean County Health Department's flu vaccination clinics during the month of October. In addition, the health department is expanding the size and scope of individuals protected against this year's flu strain by partnering with local businesses and schools to vaccinate employees and teachers against the flu.

"Our goal is to provide flu clinics to rural parts of the county with less access to the seasonal flu shot and vaccinate concentrated groups on worksites for convenience purposes before illness circulates in our community," McLean County Health Department Director Walt Howe said. "Even healthy people can get severely ill from the flu. A flu shot is the single most effective way to avoid getting and spreading the flu."

The community flu clinics are as follows:

9 to 11 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 2	Heyworth Christian Church	308 N. Vine St., Heyworth
9 to 11 a.m. Friday, Oct. 3	Saybrook-Cheney Grove Township Hall	120 State St., Saybrook
10 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Oct. 7	Saint Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chenoa	806 S. Division St., Chenoa
9 to 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 8	Hudson Township Town Hall	107 W. Walnut, Hudson

The McLean County Health Department accepts most private insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid. For individuals who would rather pay for their flu shot rather than use their insurance coverage, the cost is \$30. Insurance and Medicare/Medicaid cards must be presented at the clinic. Walk-ins are accepted. For a full list of health insurances accepted by the health department, please visit <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov/vaccines>.

Individuals with the following symptoms or conditions should not attend the flu clinics; and should consult with their primary health care provider about receiving the flu vaccine:

- fever or feel ill
- allergic to eggs or thimerosal
- severe reaction to previous flu vaccines
- previous attacks of Guillain-Barre Syndrome, Lou Gehrig's Disease (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) or other recurring or persistent neurological problems except Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinson's Disease

On-site flu clinics with local community partners will be ongoing throughout the fall season. As of Sept. 26, the following organizations are partnering with the McLean County Health Department to provide on-site flu clinics, vaccinating employees against the flu to reduce the spread of illness throughout the community: Heartland Community College, Olympia School District, Unit 5 School District, Tri-Valley School District, LeRoy School District, Lexington School District, Heyworth School District, City of Bloomington, and a number of child care centers throughout the county. If a business or government agency is interested in hosting an in-house flu clinic, call 309-888-5526.

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"It is exceptionally important for adults who are caregivers of children and those who have routine contact with the general public be vaccinated against the flu," Laura Beavers, Community Outreach Coordinator, said. "Child care providers, teachers and school staff create an immunity barrier, protecting the children against the spread of flu. If flu gets into a school setting, vaccinated staff members are protected from further spreading the illness in the school as well as from taking it home with them."

The health department also accepts walk-ins and appointments for adult flu vaccinations from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, call the health department flu line at 309-888-5397. Flu vaccine for children at the health department is administered by appointment only to children eligible for VFC, Vaccine for Children, which includes uninsured and under-insured families. Call 309-888-5455 to schedule a child flu shot.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that can affect individuals of any age and spreads very easily from person to person. Flu symptoms usually last for a few days and include fever, severe chills and body ache, fatigue, mild sniffles, dry cough, and severe chest discomfort. Sometimes, a more serious illness can develop that requires hospitalization and can even lead to death.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all people over the age of 6 months receive an annual flu shot to reduce the spread of illness. It is particularly important that individuals at high risk of serious flu complications, such as young children; pregnant women; people ages 18 to 65 with chronic health conditions; and individuals 65 years and older, get vaccinated from the flu. This year's seasonal flu vaccine protects against two influenza A viruses (an H1N1 and an H3N2) and an influenza B virus.

For more information on seasonal flu and health department clinics, visit <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov/flu>.

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