

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 9, 2017

CONTACT: Lisa Slater
(309) 888-5489 (office)
(309) 838-1599 (cell)

Increased Flu Activity Prompts Area Hospitals to Limit Visitors

There is still time to get a flu vaccination

Due to an increase in influenza activity, OSF St. Joseph Medical Center and Advocate BroMenn Medical Center are asking the public to voluntarily limit hospital visits. This is a precautionary measure to protect patients, visitors, and staff from spreading the flu and other upper respiratory illnesses.

Effective immediately it is requested that:

- Visitors be at least 18 years of age and older.
- Individuals who are not feeling well or have had flu-like symptoms in the past seven days abstain from visiting hospitalized patients. If visiting a patient cannot be avoided, wear a facemask before entering the room.
- Limit the number of visitors to two per patient at any one time.

Influenza is spread mainly when people with the flu cough or sneeze. The flu can cause mild to severe illness, and can even result in hospitalizations or death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all people over the age of 6 months receive an annual flu vaccination 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.

In addition to getting a flu vaccination, the health department encourages residents to take steps to protect themselves from getting and spreading the flu.

- Clean – frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Also, clean frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, tables, railings, light switches) regularly with cleaning wipes.

-MORE-

- Cover – cover your cough and sneeze. Sneeze into a tissue, your sleeve, or the inside of your elbow. Throw the tissue in the trash after use, and then wash your hands.
- Contain – contain your germs by staying home if you are sick. If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

The McLean County Health Department is currently offering influenza vaccinations by appointment for adults and children ages 6 months and up. To schedule an appointment, call 309-888-5435 (option 4) for adults, or 309-888-5455 for children.

The McLean County Health Department is dedicated to the prevention and control of disease through health promotion, early intervention, and health protection within the county. More information about health department services can be found at: <http://health@mcleancountyil.gov>.

###