



NEWS



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

Coughs and Sneezes Spread Diseases *Tips to help protect against nasty cold and flu germs*

BLOOMINGTON, IL- Take action to protect yourself and your family from the flu and colds. Prevention is the key.

Says Melissa Graven, Communicable Disease Supervisor at the McLean County Health Department, "While a flu shot is undeniably your best protection against seasonal flu, if you add to that a few good health practices, you can dramatically increase your odds of staying healthy this cold and flu season."

Just what are these healthy practices? We asked our public health nurses for their top 10 tips and here's what they said:

1. Get an annual seasonal flu shot
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water
3. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces
4. Avoid close contact with sick people
5. Get quality sleep on a regular schedule each night
6. Make time to exercise
7. Limit alcohol intake
8. Wash and dry fruits and vegetables to remove germs
9. Avoid sharing food or drinks
10. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold to decrease the risk of foodborne illness

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And if you do start to feel a cold or the flu coming on, stay home. Take time to rest and recover. Your body will thank you and your family, friends, co-workers, and classmates will thank you. If you stay home and rest, you will get better faster, and you won't pass your illness to those around you.

The Health Department still has flu vaccine and encourages those 6 months of age and older to get a flu shot if they have not already. Adults can receive flu vaccine on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday during regular business hours. The Health Department accepts public and most private insurance and for those who prefer to pay for their seasonal flu vaccine, the cost is \$30.

Children's flu vaccine is administered by appointment. To make an appointment at the Children's Immunization Clinic call 309-888-5455. For children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay, the Health Department is a Vaccine for Children (VFC) program participant, which gives VFC eligible families the possibility of receiving reduced cost vaccine. VFC eligible families are uninsured, underinsured, or have Medicaid coverage and are residents of McLean County.

The McLean County Health Department protects and promotes health in McLean County through the provision of seasonal flu vaccine and other immunizations. Visit our website (health.mcleancountyil.gov), follow us on Twitter (@McLeanHealth), and "Like" us on Facebook ([Facebook.com/McLeanHealth](https://www.facebook.com/McLeanHealth)), for information about public health affecting you.

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Background – Cold or Flu? What’s the difference!?!?

Learn the difference between cold symptoms and the flu in order to get better faster!

- ✓ **If it’s a cold:** sore throat, mild chills, slight body aches, runny nose, mucus-producing cough, mild chest discomfort. Treatment: antihistamines, decongestants, and pain reliever.
- ✓ **If it’s the flu:** fever, severe chills and body aches, fatigue, mild sniffles, dry cough, severe chest discomfort.
Treatment: antiviral medications; see your doctor!

Remember: The flu is a respiratory disease and not a stomach or intestinal disease - vomiting, diarrhea, and being nauseous or “sick to your stomach” are rarely the main symptoms of influenza.

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