



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2013

CONTACT:

Kimberly Parker 312/814.1577

Kimberly.Parker@illinois.gov

State Ends the September Healthy Aging Month Observance by Urging Seniors to Get Flu Shots

Getting a vaccination now will protect through the entire flu season

SPRINGFIELD - September 30, 2013. September is Healthy Aging Month, the annual observance that focuses attention on the positive aspects of growing older. And on the last day of the observance, Illinois Department on Aging Director John K. Holton, Ph.D., reminded it is a good time for older adults to assess how they are doing and take preventive measures regarding their health such as getting a seasonal flu shot.

“Seniors are at increased risk for the flu, especially those who have certain chronic health conditions. Each year, thousands of people die from the flu, and the most of those deaths occur in people ages 65 and older,” said Director Holton. “Seniors should make it a priority to get a flu shot. Getting vaccinated now can help protect you through the entire flu season.”

The flu season typically runs from October through May with the peak in January or February. Public health officials recommend that everyone six months of age and older get vaccinated for influenza each year because the flu season changes and effectiveness of the previous year’s vaccination decreases. Complications from flu can affect a person of any age, but the elderly and people with chronic health problems are much more likely to develop serious complications after influenza infection than younger, healthier people.

Flu symptoms can include fever 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher often with chills, and respiratory symptoms, such as cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and extreme fatigue.

The flu, formally called influenza, is a contagious spread through coughing or sneezing. In addition to getting a flu shot to prevent getting the flu, people are also encouraged to use good sanitary measures, such as covering the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, washing their hands and staying away from others when sick.

The flu vaccine is usually offered at local health departments, as well as health clinics and pharmacies. The cost of the flu vaccine may vary, but is covered by Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurance.

For more information about influenza including where to get a season flu shot, log onto the Illinois Department of Public Health website at idph.state.il.us/flu/.

For more information about program services to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, visit www.state.il.us/aging or call the Department on Aging Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

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