



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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NEWS RELEASE

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Date: September 23, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Wide Flu Clinics in Dickinson and Iron County

Kingsford, Michigan – September 23, 2008. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department announced today plans to conduct community-wide influenza (flu) immunization clinics.

In Iron County the influenza clinic will be held in conjunction with the Iron County Community Hospital Health Fair on Thursday, October 23, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Elks Lodge in Iron River. Appointments are required and can be scheduled by calling (906) 265-4150.

In Dickinson County a community-wide influenza clinic will be held on Saturday, October 25, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Kingsford Middle School. **This will be a WALK-IN clinic APPOINTMENTS ARE NOT REQUIRED.**

After October 25th additional clinics will be held at the Health Department offices depending on the availability of vaccine.

The flu immunization is a covered benefit for Medicare part B and Michigan Medicaid recipients. If you have private health insurance that covers the flu immunization, the Health Department may bill your health insurance. For those without insurance coverage for the flu vaccination the charge is \$30 for adults and \$13 for children 6 months – 18 years of age.

The pneumococcal immunization will also be available and is a Medicare Part B benefit. If you do not have Medicare Part B the charge is \$46.

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Influenza vaccination is recommended for:

- **All children 6 months through 18 years of age.**
- **Anyone 50 years of age or older.**
- **People at high risk for complications from influenza:**
 - Women who will be pregnant during influenza season
 - People 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment.
 - Residents of long-term care facilities housing persons with chronic medical conditions.
 - People who have long-term health problems with:
 - heart disease –kidney disease –metabolic disease, such as diabetes
 - lung disease –asthma –anemia, and other blood disorders
 - liver disease
- **People with a weakened immune system due to:**
 - HIV/AIDS or another disease that affects the immune system
 - long-term treatment with drugs such as steroids
 - cancer treatment with x-rays or drugs
- **People with certain muscle or nerve disorders** (such as seizure disorders or severe cerebral palsy) that can lead to breathing or swallowing problems.
- **People 6 months through 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment** (they could develop Reye Syndrome if they got influenza)
- **People who can spread influenza to those at high risk:**
 - Household contacts and out-of-home caretakers of children from birth up to 5 years of age.
 - Health care providers;
 - Household contacts and caregivers of people 50 years and older, and those with medical conditions that put them at higher risk for severe complications from influenza.
- **A yearly influenza vaccination should be considered for:**
 - People who provide essential community services.
 - People living in dormitories or under other crowded conditions, to prevent outbreaks.
 - People at high risk for flu complications who travel to the Southern hemisphere between April and September, or who travel to the tropics or in organized tourist groups at any time.
- **Influenza vaccinations are also recommended for anyone who wants to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill with influenza or spreading influenza to others.**

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Flu (influenza) is a serious disease. It is caused by a virus that spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. The flu season in our local area is usually around January or February. Vaccine will begin to provide its protective effect after about one to two weeks and immunity may decrease, on average, after several months. Flu can cause fever, cough, chills, sore throat, headache and muscle aches.

This year's flu vaccine contains the strains of flu which have been circulating in the past year and are most likely to occur in the United States this winter. Immunity produced by the flu immunization decreases in the year after vaccination. A flu immunization should be received each year. All viruses in the vaccine are killed so they cannot infect anyone. Flu immunizations will not protect all persons who use them against the flu, nor protect against other illnesses that resemble the flu.

Pneumococcal disease is a serious disease that causes much sickness and death. Pneumococcal disease can lead to serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the blood (bacteremia), and the covering of the brain (meningitis). Anyone can get pneumococcal disease. However, some people are at greater risk from the disease. These include people 65 and older, the very young, and people with special health problems such as alcoholism, heart or lung disease, kidney failure, diabetes, HIV infection, or certain types of cancer. Otherwise healthy children who often get ear infections, sinus infections, or other upper respiratory diseases do not need to get the pneumococcal vaccination because of these conditions.

Usually one dose of pneumococcal vaccine is needed. However, under certain circumstances a second dose may be given.

Persons who are in the high risk category due to an illness should consult with their physician prior to receiving the pneumococcal vaccine.

Additional information about influenza is available through the Health Department's web site at www.didhd.org.

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