



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Protect Yourself Against the Flu!

Kingsford, Michigan – January 5, 2006. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department reports today that Michigan is experiencing sporadic influenza disease activity. Influenza activity does not appear to have peaked yet and could still continue for several months. The health department is continuing to offer flu vaccine to the public.

The influenza (flu) vaccine prevents the flu, a common and highly contagious infection that can cause serious illness, and even death, in young children, older adults, and certain vulnerable people of all ages. The single best way to protect against the flu is to get the flu vaccination. About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against influenza virus infection develop in the body.

An annual flu shot is **recommended** for:

- All children 6-23 months of age. Influenza immunization of healthy children 6 to 23 months old is encouraged because the flu can lead to ear infections and other complications including pneumonia, myocarditis (inflammation of the heart), and worsening of chronic bronchitis (inflammation of the lungs).
- Household contacts and out-of-home caretakers of infants from 0-23 months of age.
- People 50 years of age or older.
- Residents of long-term care facilities housing persons with chronic medical conditions.
- People who have long-term health problems with heart, kidney, or lung disease; metabolic disease, such as diabetes; asthma; anemia, and other blood disorders.

-More-

- 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; or people 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment (these people could develop Reye Syndrome if they get the flu).
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- Physicians, nurses, family members, or anyone else coming in close contact with people at risk of serious influenza.
- People who provide essential community services.
- People living in dormitories or under other crowded conditions, to prevent outbreaks.
- Anyone else who wants to reduce their chance of catching influenza.

The Health Department can bill Michigan Medicaid, Medicare Part B and most private health insurance for the flu immunization. The charge is \$30 for adults and \$12-\$25 for children 6 months to 18 years of age.

The last clinics of the season are being scheduled now. To make an appointment, call the Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

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