



CHCHD News

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

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Increased flu-like illness reports in the region, but it's not too late to get vaccinated

Chattanooga, TN- Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department influenza surveillance indicates that over the past week there has been an increase of influenza-like illness in the community. Since flu can continue to circulate through March and April, it's not too late to protect yourself and your family from the flu.

The CDC recommends annual flu vaccine for everyone age 6 months and older to reduce their risk of getting the flu. The 2010-2011 flu vaccine will protect against 2009 H1N1, and two other influenza viruses (an H3N2 virus and an influenza B virus). It takes about two weeks after the vaccination for protective antibodies to develop. Because immunity wanes over time and circulating flu strains may change, annual vaccination is necessary to prevent the flu.

Influenza is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus that can be spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Flu symptoms typically include: fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches, and extreme tiredness.

Persons sick with the flu should stay home; wash their hands frequently; cover their noses or mouths when coughing or sneezing; and drink plenty of fluids. They also can contact their doctor, who may prescribe antiviral drugs that can help reduce the time it takes for symptoms to improve.

For most people, the flu lasts only a few days, but some people are at high risk of developing serious complications from seasonal flu. These people and those who live with or care for those at high risk for serious complications are especially urged to be vaccinated. The flu can lead to pneumonia and can be dangerous for people with heart or breathing conditions.

Flu vaccine is available at each of our health clinics.

- Third Street Facility-209-8050
- Ooltewah Health Center-238-4269
- Sequoyah Health Center- 842-3031
- Birchwood Health Center-961-0446

The cost of the flu shot or nasal spray vaccine is \$30. Pneumonia vaccine is also available for \$52. Flu and pneumonia vaccines combined are \$67. Any patient who gets a flu or pneumonia vaccine can get a tetanus shot for free. The Health Department accepts Medicare Part B, Blue Advantage, Railroad Medicare, TennCare, cash, or check.

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