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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flu Season Is Here - Vaccinate to Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones from Flu
Community Walk-In Flu Vaccination Clinics for children 3 years and older have been
scheduled by the Winnebago County Health Department

The Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) is announcing the Flu Vaccination Clinics for the 2016- 2017 season. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Winnebago County Health Department recommend everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot this year to reduce their risk of flu illness and to protect people around them.

Now is a good time to get your flu shot. It takes about two weeks after receiving the shot for the protection to set in. The flu season can begin as early as October, but most commonly peaks in the January or February. “Flu is unpredictable and we can’t say exactly what the season will bring, but even healthy people children and adults can get the flu and it can be serious. You can do your part to protect yourself and those around you by getting your flu vaccination this season,” said Winnebago County Health Department Health Protection Director, Todd Kisner.

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory disease that infects the nose, throat, and lungs and can lead to serious complications (ex. Pneumonia and bronchitis), hospitalization, or even death. Influenza is spread by coughing, sneezing, or nasal secretions.

Anyone can get influenza but rates of infection are highest among children. For most people symptoms last only a few days. The symptoms include: fever, sore throat, chills, fatigue, cough, headache, and muscle aches. The flu also can cause certain health conditions, like diabetes, asthma, and heart and lung disease, to become worse. These conditions also put you at greater risk of flu complications.

Even if you were vaccinated last year it is important to get an annual flu shot because:

- Flu viruses are constantly changing, and flu vaccines are usually updated from one season to the next to protect against the most recent and most commonly circulating viruses.
- A person's immune protection from vaccination declines over time and annual vaccination is needed for optimal protection. Therefore, annual vaccination is recommended even for those who received the vaccine for the previous season.

This year's flu vaccine is made in the same way as past flu vaccines and has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, an annual average of 100 million doses of Influenza vaccine has been used in the United States each year and the vaccine has an excellent safety record.

The Winnebago County Health Department is offering the Quadrivalent vaccine which is designed to protect against four different flu viruses: two Influenza A viruses and two Influenza B viruses. The cost is \$39 or Medicaid and Medicare Part B accepted. WCHD is also offering the high dose vaccine available which is approved for people 65 years and older. The High Dose vaccine is \$62. This vaccine is also covered by Medicare Part B. Other third party insurance plans are accepted. Please call 815-720-4274 to verify eligibility on third party coverage.

Since the viruses in the flu shot are dead (inactivated), you cannot get the flu from the vaccination. Generally side effects are a sore arm or redness around the injection site. The vaccine usually takes two weeks for your body to develop the antibodies to fight off infection if you are exposed to the flu virus.

Individuals with the following conditions are highly encouraged to get an annual flu shot:

- Young Children
- Pregnant women
- Individuals who care for children younger than 6 months of age
- People with chronic health conditions: such as heart, lung or, diabetes, or a weakened immune system
- Healthcare workers
- People 65 years of age and older

Flu shots are administered by Registered Nurses from the Winnebago County Health Department. The Winnebago County Health Department's complete flu clinic schedule can be found at www.wchd.org, or by calling 815-720-4274.

Take these everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs and to prevent the flu.

- **Clean your hands** – Wash your hands with soap and warm water after coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** – Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing , if you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow—not your hands
- **Contain your germs** – Stay home if you have the flu. If you have fever or chills and a cough or sore throat, call your doctor.

For more information on 2016-2017 influenza season visit the Winnebago County Health Department website at www.wchd.org, or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov. Like us: [facebook.com/Winnebago County Health Department](https://www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCountyHealthDepartment). Follow us: twitter.com/WinnCohealth.

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