

CHENANGO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

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The Importance of Getting Flu Vaccination This Year

Over the upcoming flu season, getting vaccinated will be one the most important things you can do to protect yourself from illness. Flu vaccination can help reduce the overall impact of respiratory illnesses on the population and lessen the resulting burden on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that many of the signs and symptoms of the Flu are similar to those of COVID-19 so it can become difficult to identify which illness a person may have without performing additional tests. The flu vaccine provides many individual health benefits including keeping you from getting sick with the flu or reducing the severity of your illness if you do get flu.

Normally the Chenango County Health Department holds a *Senior Flu Event* at the YMCA in Norwich during the last week in September. We are unable to do the event this year due to increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 and large gatherings. We ARE planning to hold a flu clinic for the public in the near future. We will announce them as soon as the dates are decided.

We urge you to contact your healthcare provider or go to your local pharmacy to receive the flu vaccine this year. This is the best way to assure that you receive a flu vaccine in a timely manner.

Efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as stay-at-home orders and social distancing, have led to decreased use of routine preventive medical care, including immunizations. Ensuring that people continue or start getting routine vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential for protecting people and communities from diseases and outbreaks, including flu. Routine

vaccination prevents illnesses that lead to unnecessary medical visits and hospitalizations, which further strain the healthcare system.

What is influenza (also called flu)

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

Signs and symptoms of flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

How flu spreads

Most experts believe flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or nose. Proper handwashing is very important.

For more information, access <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

Persons with questions or requiring additional information may contact the
Chenango County Health Department at **(607) 337-1660**.

Promoting and protecting health, safety, and the quality of life in Chenango County