

CHENANGO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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For The Health of IT

Date: January 26, 2015

Release Date: Immediate

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What is Flu? Is it contagious? How can we keep from getting it? Are there treatments?

According to the CDC, the flu “is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs”. The best way to avoid the flu is to get a flu vaccine every year. You may have heard that the flu vaccine isn’t working very well this year and that is true. This year’s vaccine does not seem to be working as well as we had hoped against the H3N2 (influenza A) viruses, although it is proving to be effective against other strains of flu. Vaccination is still the best protection against the flu, and it can reduce hospitalizations and deaths.

The flu virus spreads from person to person in droplet form by common activities such as talking, coughing, and sneezing. It can also be spread by touch items, like door knobs and telephones, then touching your nose, mouth or eyes. It is important to wash your hands often, and cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

If you are sick stay home! A person is contagious and can infect others 1 day prior to having symptoms of the flu, and up to 7 days after the symptoms appear. Common symptoms of the flu include chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and fatigue. Some people may run a fever, and some may experience vomiting and diarrhea (though this tends to be more common in children than adults).

Protecting yourself and your family from the flu involves these simple steps:

Get the flu vaccine, if you haven’t already. The health department continues to recommend that those people who have not received the flu vaccine this year call their health care provider, go to a local pharmacy, or call the county health department to arrange for the vaccine.

Wash your hands often with soap and water. If you don't have access to soap and water use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Avoid contact with people who are sick

Clean and disinfect your work area. Include doorknobs, telephones, and keyboards to help remove germs.

Eat right and get plenty of rest.

If you do get the flu, ask your healthcare provider for a prescription antiviral, which are most effective if started within 48 hours of the onset of flu symptoms. These medications are used to treat the flu by making the illness milder and shorter in duration. Antiviral medications can also prevent serious complications, hospitalization and even death.

For more information about the flu or the flu vaccine please call the Chenango County Health Department at (607) 337-1660.

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