

# Emergency Public Health Preparedness

September 2015

Genesee County Health Department

For more emergency preparedness information, visit the Genesee **County Health Department on** the web at www.gchd.us.

#### **Resources for Emergency Preparedness** Information

www.ready.gov www.flu.gov www.do I thing.com www.redcross.org www.michigan.gov/flu/ www.cdc.gov



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## 2015—2016 Flu Update

Flu activity usually peaks between December and February, but, outbreaks can happen as early as October and can last as late as May.

People should get vaccinated soon after the vaccine becomes available to ensure that as many people as possible are protected before flu season begins. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against influenza virus infection. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating in the community, it's not too late to get vaccinated.

This season both of the trivalent (protects against 3 strains) and quadrivalent (protects against four flu strains) vaccines will be

available. Different routes of administration are available including intramuscular, intradermal, jet injector and nasal spray vaccine. This season:

- Intramuscular (IM) vaccines will be available in both trivalent and quadrivalent.
- For people 18 through 64 years old, a jet injector (needleless injection) can be used for delivery of one particular trivalent flu vaccine (AFLURIA® by bioCSL Inc.).
- Nasal spray vaccines will all be quadrivalent.
- Intradermal vaccine will all be quadrivalent.

While it is recommended that everyone over the age of 6 months receive the flu vaccine, vaccination is especially important for people at high risk for serious flu complications, and their close contacts. High risk individuals include, children, adults 65 and older, pregnant women, residents of nursing homes and long term care facilities, American Indians and Alaskan Natives. Also. people who have medical conditions such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, sickle cell, and HIV/AIDS.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov. For a list of flu clinics in Genesee County visit www.gchd.us in the upcoming events section.

### **Teach Kids Five Steps for Handwashing**

It is back to school time and many kids will be in close quarters. Remind your kids about these five steps for proper handwashing:

- I. Wet hands under warm running water.
- 2. Soap up hands and rub them together to
- create a lather. Scrub hands with soap away from running water for 20 seconds. Wash front and back of hands, between fingers, and underneath fingernails.
- 3. Rinse hands well under warm running water.
- 4. Dry hands well with a clean towel, turn off water with a clean paper towel, and dispose in the trash.
- 5. Ask for hand sanitizer or a wet wipe if soap and water are not available.

## September is National Preparedness Month



Remember to keep an emergency supply kit in your car and at work. September is National Preparedness Month (NPM). This year's theme is "Don't wait. Communicate. Make your emergency plan today." The Health Department encourages all individuals, households, businesses and communities to prepare and plan for emergencies.

A public health emergency or a natural disaster can occur at any moment without warning. An emergency or disaster can force you either to evacuate or stay in your home. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes so it is important to have an emergency plan. Think about how you will contact each other and how you will communicate in different

situations. Consider what is most likely to occur in your area, for example, in recent years Genesee County residents have experienced flooding, tornadoes, extreme heat, extreme cold, ice storms, large snow storms, and prolonged power outages. The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) has a Family Emergency Plan template to help get you started in your preparedness efforts. Visit www.gchd.us and click on Family Emergency Plan under the popular pages section.

When preparing your plan and your emergency supplies keep in mind that you may be without power, water, and access to local stores and

services.

Consider where your family members spend their time. Do you have kids in school or daycare? Do you have parents or close relatives in long term care? Find out what their emergency plans are so you know what to expect in an emergency.

Remember to plan for household pets and any other special needs your family may have. Also consider elderly family or neighbors that might need your assistance in an emergency. Once you have established your plan, make sure to practice it with your family. For more information regarding emergency preparedness, visit www.gchd.us or www.ready.gov.

## Fall Back and Get Prepared



Daylight saving time is just around the corner. The time change is a great time to get organized and prepared. As you change the clocks think about these other important items too.

- Change the batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Refresh your emergency stockpile.

Discard any expired items and replace them with new.

- Check your flashlights and replace batteries if needed.
- Prepare for cold and flu season. The CDC recommends that you stay home when you are sick. Stock up on anything you would want if you became ill such as non-
- prescription medications, Kleenex, soup, tea, etc.
- Update your Family Emergency Plan and practice it. Review your plan and update any information that has changed.

For more information on preparedness and stockpiling visit www.getreadyforflu.org.