



Influenza Currently Circulating in Linn County

Flu vaccination is still best protection against illness

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) says all three viruses covered by this year's influenza vaccine, including Influenza A (H3N2), A (H1N1), and B are currently circulating in Iowa. An additional drifted strain of Influenza A (H3N2) is also in circulation in the United States. This strain has accounted for about half the illness seen across the country so far this year. Earlier this month, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that the current influenza vaccine is not as effective in protecting against the drifted strain. However, the vaccine does provide protection against the other circulating strains of influenza.

Despite the reduced ability of the current influenza vaccine to protect against the drifted H3N2 strain, Linn County Public Health (LCPH), IDPH, and CDC are strongly recommending that Iowans get vaccinated. Like in past years, the vaccine provides some protection against the drifted strain and will continue to protect against the strains already being detected. As more cases of influenza are being seen in Linn County, LCPH is reminding community members that **it is not too late to get the flu vaccine**. Influenza vaccines are still available at Linn County Public Health, many provider offices, and select pharmacies. It is important to protect yourself and those you come into contact with by getting a flu shot each year.

With many people traveling for the holiday season, it is a great time to make an effort to protect yourself and those you come into contact with by getting the flu vaccine and preventing the spread of disease. The spread of disease may be prevented by practicing the 3 C's:

- Cover your cough/sneeze
- Clean your hands often
- Contain yourself at home when ill

The flu is a respiratory illness caused by viruses. The flu comes on suddenly and symptoms may include fever, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, and body aches. Illness typically lasts two to seven days. Influenza may cause severe illness or even death. If you do become ill, it is important to remember that anti-viral medications, such as Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir), are an effective second line in defense to reduce potentially severe complications. However, the medications are most effective if started within 48 hours of when you become ill.

The LCPH clinic (501 13th St. NW, Cedar Rapids) can provide the flu vaccine via walk-in or through an appointment. To learn more information please call 319.892.6065.