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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Kent County Braces for Flu**  
**Reminder: Flu Vaccinations are your Best Shot for Avoiding Influenza**

(GRAND RAPIDS) – Influenza cases generally start peaking in February. The Kent County Health Department notes the trend is rising, so now is a good time to remind everyone how to avoid the flu.

Testing has determined that many of the cases being reported are “Influenza type A,” also known as the seasonal flu. This is one of the types contained in the flu vaccination. If you haven’t received a vaccination against the flu this year, now is a good time to do it. “You should note that the vaccination can take about two weeks to become effective,” says Cathy Raevsky, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “Flu vaccines for children and adults are safe, and we have plenty of injection and nasal mist available right now.”

There are other steps you can take to prevent getting the flu as well as several other viruses. Avoid people who are already sick or running a fever if possible, and if you are sick, stay home, to prevent spreading the illness to others. Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, and toss the tissue in the trash after you use it. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer. And remember, germs spread when you touch your eyes, nose and mouth.

While everyone should get vaccinated against the flu virus, we especially recommend people at high risk of serious flu complications (young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease, and people 65 years and older) get vaccinated. Health care workers, and those who care for high risk people, should as well. Children under 6 months are too young to be vaccinated, so people who care for them should be vaccinated instead.

Signs and symptoms of flu include fever (or feeling feverish/chills), cough and/or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue (very tired), vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Not everyone with flu will have a fever, or experience all of the symptoms.

Be sure to check out the Kent County Health Department website, “[Stick it to the Flu](http://www.stickittotheflu.com/)” at <http://www.stickittotheflu.com/> to learn more about flu vaccinations, prevention tips and treatment, or call (616) 632-7200 to make an appointment.

**KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).**

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