
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 30, 2013

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Cases of Flu Detected in Kent County

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department is seeing an increase in the number of flu cases reported from area emergency departments and health care providers, in comparison with this time last year. So far, seven cases have been reported to KCHD; two in September, and five in October. (Kent County had a total of seven cases reported at the end of November 2012.)

“Last season, those who got the flu suffered severe symptoms at the early onset of illness,” says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “It can take about two weeks for the vaccination to become effective. Now is the time to get you and your family vaccinated.” The flu can have serious complications for children under the age of five, the elderly, and people with already-weakened immune systems. The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone over 6 months of age to protect against flu viruses.

The Kent County Health Department seasonal influenza program provides vaccinations for all individuals six months of age and older. The cost of the vaccine is \$25 for injectable three strain vaccine, \$29 for preservative free three strain vaccine, \$30 for preservative free four strain vaccine or \$33 for FluMist nasal spray (a live, preservative-free, four strain vaccine).

Children from six months through eighteen years who have no insurance, or who have insurance that doesn't cover vaccines, will pay a sliding scale administration fee of up to \$15. The Health Department can only bill Medicaid and Medicare. Cash, check, MasterCard, Visa, or Discover are accepted. To make an appointment at any of our five clinic locations, call (616) 632-7200. You can also schedule online at www.sticktototheflu.com. Flu information is also available on our information only line at (616) 742-4FLU (358).

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu viruses can spread when people with flu cough, sneeze, or even talk. Someone might also get flu by touching a surface or object (like a phone) that has flu virus on it, and then touching their own mouth, eyes, or nose. It impacts schools and workplaces, but it can be prevented.

The flu can cause mild to severe illness, and in some cases, it can be deadly. Signs and symptoms can include fever, chills, cough, 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 experience all of the symptoms.

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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.

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