



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Lawrence County Public Health urges community members to get vaccinated for flu as COVID-19 cases remain high and flu cases begin to increase

Canton, NY —As Flu (Influenza) season begins and COVID-19 cases continue to surge, the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department stresses the importance of getting vaccinated for flu. The County is already seeing an increase in flu cases. Our hospitals are strained and near maximum capacity at this time, due to caring for patients with COVID-19 and other illnesses. The burden of people sick with flu will continue to overwhelm our hospitals. Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year. Being vaccinated for flu and COVID-19 can greatly reduce a person's need to be hospitalized if they become infected with either of these illnesses.

Symptoms of flu start suddenly. They appear about 1 to 4 days after a person is exposed to flu. Symptoms include fever, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, headaches, fatigue, and occasional vomiting. Some symptoms of flu are similar to COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses. The difference between them cannot be made based on symptoms alone, which is why testing is needed to tell what the illness is and to confirm a diagnosis. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), people can be infected with both flu and the virus that causes COVID-19 at the same time and have symptoms of both influenza and COVID-19.

Everyone 6 months and older should get their flu vaccine. The vaccine can make symptoms milder and reduce the risk of more serious complications. Getting the flu vaccine is especially important for those at higher risk of complications, such as people over 65, children younger than 5, pregnant women, and those with certain health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or obesity. Fluzone High-Dose, the high-dose flu vaccine, is recommended for people ages 65 and older. Fluzone High-Dose is intended to give people 65 and older a better immune response to the vaccine, and therefore, better protection against the flu. You can receive the COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine at the same time.

In addition to getting the flu vaccine, the following precautions should be taken to protect against the spread of flu and other viruses like COVID-19:



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- Stay home when sick until fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissues. Discard tissue right away.
- Continue to wear a mask in indoor public spaces.
- Maintain a 6 foot distance from people outside of your household.

If you believe you have flu, contact your doctor right away. Treatment with a prescription antiviral drug, such as Tamiflu, may be necessary. Early treatment with an antiviral drug can help prevent flu symptoms from worsening and shorten the time you are sick.

A yearly flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Call your primary care physician or local pharmacy to receive your flu shot today! If you have further questions regarding flu, please call the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department at 315-3863-2325.

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