



## St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

Dana Olzenak McGuire, PT, PhD ▪ Public Health

Director

80 State Highway 310, Suite 2 ▪ Canton, New York 13617-1476

Phone: (315) 386-2325 ▪ Fax: (315) 386-2203

### Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: 315-386-2325

#### Flu and COVID-19

**Canton, NY**— As influenza (flu) season approaches during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department reminds residents flu prevention is more important than ever. The flu is not just a really bad cold—it is a potentially serious, contagious illness that affects the nose, throat, lungs, and other parts of the body. The flu can spread quickly from one person to another. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) believes that flu viruses and the viruses that cause COVID-19 will both be spreading this fall and winter, making it even more important for everyone 6 months and older to receive their flu shot this year.

Unlike a cold, flu symptoms start suddenly. They appear about 1 to 4 days after a person is exposed to the flu. It can cause mild to severe illness. Symptoms include fever, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue and occasional vomiting. Serious outcomes of flu can lead to hospitalization and even death. Some symptoms of the flu are similar to COVID-19 and it can be hard to tell the difference.

Young children, people 65 and older, pregnant women and people with certain medical complications like cancer or chronic lung disease, are at increased risk of complications from flu. If you are in a high risk group and develop flu symptoms, it's best for you to contact your doctor early in your illness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that people at high risk for complications should get antiviral treatment as early as possible, because benefit is greatest if treatment is started within 2 days after illness onset.

Please take these three actions to fight the flu:

- **Get a flu shot!**
  - Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot.
  - Getting a flu shot every year provides the best protection against the flu.
  - Receiving a flu shot eliminates some of the similar symptoms to COVID-19.
- **Take everyday actions to stop the spread of germs:**
  - Wash your hands often;
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze;
  - Stay home when you are sick; and
  - Avoid close contact with sick people.
- **Take flu antiviral medication appropriately if your doctor prescribes it.** If you get sick with flu, prescription antiviral medicine can be used to treat flu illness. Antiviral medication

can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it's even more important to do everything possible to reduce illnesses and preserve health care resources. Call your primary care physician or local pharmacy to receive your flu shot today! If you have further questions regarding the flu or COVID-19, please call the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department at 315-3863-2325.

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