

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Adirondack Bank Building, 5th Floor, 185 Genesee St., Utica, NY 13501

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR.
ONEIDA COUNTY EXECUTIVE



PHYLLIS D. ELLIS, BSN, MS, F.A.C.H.E.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

ADMINISTRATION

Phone: (315) 798-6400 ☎ Fax: (315) 266-6138

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Contact: Sandra Pejic 798-5457

National Influenza Vaccination Week – December 7th – 13th

The Oneida County Health Department reminds everyone that the best protection against the flu is the flu vaccine and encourages everyone 6-months and older who has not yet received a flu shot to do so during *National Influenza Immunization Week – December 7th – 13th*.

National Influenza Vaccination week is a yearly promotion campaign developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC stresses the importance of receiving a yearly influenza vaccination as one of the most important steps a person can take to lower the risk of becoming ill with Flu. Local health officials agree.

“It’s not too late to guard against this season’s flu virus,” Phyllis Ellis, Director of Health for the Oneida County Health Department said. She added, *“It takes two weeks for the body to develop immunity after receiving the vaccine, so people shouldn’t delay getting a flu shot.”*

Ellis stressed that it’s particularly important for seniors and those working in the health care field to get immunized. Under New York State Law health care workers who are not immunized must wear surgical masks while performing their duties if flu is considered widespread in their locale. The immunization of those working in health care is intended to reduce transmission of influenza, reduce staff illness and absenteeism and reduce flu-related illnesses and deaths especially among those who are at high risk of developing the flu and its complications.

“As we age, our immune system weakens making us more susceptible to chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, chronic lung disease and heart disease,” Health Department Clinic Director Sandra Pejic said. *“It’s estimated that flu-related deaths in the U.S. range from 3,000 to 49,000 annually. Many of these deaths are among the older population so persons over 65 years of age, especially those with chronic medical conditions, should be immunized and discuss the pneumonia vaccine with their health care provider.”*

While some decreased effectiveness has been reported in **one** of the three or four strains included in this year’s vaccine, flu vaccination is still highly recommended as it may reduce the likelihood of severe outcomes such as hospitalization and death. Take necessary steps to prevent the spread of flu which includes covering coughs and sneezes with the bend of your arm instead of your hand, washing your hands properly and frequently, and staying home from work or school if you experience flu symptoms. Contact your healthcare provider at the onset of symptoms as antiviral medications are most effective if administered within 48 hours. You should remain home for at

least 24-hours after symptoms subside.

Flu vaccine is available at many area retail pharmacies or at any of the Oneida County Health Department's "walk-in" clinics in Utica or Rome. For clinic schedules visit the Health Department's web site at www.ocgov.net/oneida/health or call the Oneida County Health Department at (315) 798-6400.