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NEWS

SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS – COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

Jill Tinsley
Kristi Zukovich
316-660-9370

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGES FLU SHOT IN SEDGWICK COUNTY

(Sedgwick County, Kan.) – Influenza is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year usually between October and May. The Sedgwick County Health Department (SCHD) says that vaccination (flu shot) is still the best way to protect yourself and your family from becoming ill with the flu.

Flu is caused by influenza viruses, and is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing and close contact. Anyone can get the flu. Flu strikes suddenly and can last several days. Symptoms vary by age, but can include: fever/chills, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, cough, headache, runny or stuffy nose.

You can prevent the spread of flu and safeguard yourself and your family with these simple steps:

1. Get a flu vaccination.
2. Wash your hands. Use hand sanitizer if soap and running water are not available.
3. Cough and sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
4. Stay home if you become ill.

There is no live virus in flu shots, and the vaccine cannot cause the flu. The SCHD and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend the flu vaccine because it can keep you from getting flu, make flu less severe if you do get it, and keep you from spreading flu to your family and other people.

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“People who do develop flu symptoms, should contact their medical provider right away,” said Sedgwick County Health Department Director Adrienne Byrne-Lutz. “Prescription antiviral medications are available to shorten the duration of flu symptoms and reduce the risk of complications.”

If you have questions about the flu vaccine, please call our Immunizations Line at 316-660-7362. The SCHED currently provides:

- Free flu vaccinations to uninsured adults age 19 and older
- Flu vaccinations to uninsured children age 18 and younger, and children with state-sponsored insurance plans such as Medicaid, Amerigroup, United Healthcare or Sunflower. A sliding fee scale is available for children who qualify.

Residents who qualify may visit the health department's clinic at 2716 W. Central in Wichita. Clinic hours are:

Monday-Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Thursday, noon to 6:30 p.m.

Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you do not qualify for a free flu vaccination, please visit your primary care physician or neighborhood pharmacy to receive one. Visit www.flu.gov for information about resources in your area. Flu vaccinations are recommended for anyone six months or older, unless otherwise directed by a physician. It is important to get a flu vaccination every year, as the most prevalent flu strains are usually different from year to year. Flu vaccination protects the person receiving it, as well as others who are not able to receive this type of immunization.

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