

# **ALLEGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

3255 – 122<sup>ND</sup> Ave., Suite 200, Allegan, MI 49010

## **Office Administration**

(269) 673-5411

## **Bioterrorism Preparedness**

(269) 686-4570

## **Personal Health**

(269) 673-5413



## **Communicable Disease**

(269) 686-4524

## **Environmental Health**

(269) 673-5415

## **Resource Recovery**

(269) 673-5415

January 22, 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Influenza is now widespread throughout Michigan. Allegan County is not being spared. The number of people presenting to emergency departments and clinics from the illness continues to rise along with cases of influenza-like illnesses reported through schools and childcare centers.

Influenza, also called “the flu”, is a respiratory viral illness that can cause fever, cough, chills, headache, muscle aches, runny nose and sore throat. With true influenza a fever is almost always present and the cough is often severe. Influenza symptoms usually last 2 to 7 days.

The influenza virus spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes, causing droplets containing the virus to spread in the air. Uninfected people can become infected by being in close contact with these droplets (within 6 feet) and breathing them in or by touching surfaces the droplets fell onto.

There are many things that can be done to keep our schools, homes, and communities “flu-free” and protect ourselves and our loved ones:

1. It’s not too late to get vaccinated. Influenza vaccine is widely available through the local health department, area physicians and pharmacies.
2. As a general rule, even outside of influenza, children and adults should stay home when ill. We recommend that people sick with any influenza-like illness remain at home until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
3. Teach your family how to lower their risk of getting and spreading the influenza virus by:
  - Washing their hands often with soap and running warm water for at least 20 seconds.
  - If a hand washing station is not available, use hand sanitizer properly. Gels, rubs, and hand wipes work well against influenza if they contain at least 60% alcohol. Throw wipes in the trash after use.
  - Coughing or sneezing into their upper shirt sleeve or elbow—not onto their hands!
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth. That’s how germs enter the body.
4. Contact your health care provider to see about an anti-viral medication, which can lessen flu symptoms and shorten the duration of illness

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Allegan County Health Department at 269-673-5411 with any questions.

Visit the following websites for more information: [www.allegancounty.org/health](http://www.allegancounty.org/health) or [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)