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August 25, 2016

For Immediate Release

Flu Mist Option Not Recommended for 2016-17 Influenza Season

Green County residents strongly encouraged to protect themselves with a flu shot before the season arrives

The Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) announced in July that the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), best known as nasal spray, or by the trade name Flu Mist, should not be used during the 2016-17 influenza season. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted to recommend it not be used after data showed poor or relatively low effectiveness of the nasal spray from 2013 through 2016.

"While it is disappointing to see data suggesting that the nasal spray vaccine is not working as well as expected, we are pleased that flu shots did perform well last season," said State Health Officer Karen McKeown. "We expect that there will be enough of the injectable vaccine available for the 2016-17 season so everyone 6 months and older can protect themselves and their loved ones against the flu."

How well the flu vaccine works can range widely from season to season and can be affected by a number of factors, including the similarity between vaccine viruses and circulating viruses. The CDC conducts vaccine effectiveness studies each season to gauge the success of a vaccine in preventing the flu virus. Data on the effectiveness of the nasal spray among children ages 2-17 during the 2015-16 season found that no effective benefit from the LAIV could be measured. By comparison, data found the injectable vaccine to be very effective in preventing flu among children in this age group. This change in recommendation underscores the importance of ongoing efforts to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of vaccines to ensure the public is optimally protected from health threats.

Accordingly to RoAnn Warden, RN and Green County Health Officer, "During the 2015-16 flu season there were 434 influenza related hospitalizations in the southern region of the state. It is important to get vaccinated every year to prevent getting influenza (flu)." In Green County, only 31% of children under 19 years of age, 29% of adults age 19-64, and 57% of adults 65 or older were vaccinated for influenza during the 2015-16 season.

Green County Health Department will be holding community flu shot clinics in the fall. Check out www.greencountyhealth.org or call (608) 328-9390 for dates and times of scheduled flu clinics.

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