



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 22, 2014

CONTACT:
Dan Reynolds
(231) 547-7629
d.reynolds@nwhealth.org



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
of Northwest Michigan

www.nwhealth.org

Flu cases spike in Northern Michigan this holiday season

CHARLEVOIX – While spreading holiday cheer is fully appreciated, spreading the flu is not.

As Christmas and the New Year close in and people gather to celebrate the holidays, influenza activity in Northern Michigan is rising. Reported cases of the flu have “increased drastically” throughout the state, according to the [Michigan Department of Community Health](#).

“The flu spreads easily this time of year,” said Suzette Daly, Family and Community Health Nurse Supervisor at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. “Not only are people traveling and attending celebrations, but some may be infected but have no symptoms. During this time, those people may unknowingly spread the virus to others.”

The key to staying healthy this season is prevention. The Health Department of Northwest Michigan encourages everyone to receive the influenza vaccine. “Vaccination is the best way to protect against the flu,” Daly said. “It can prevent serious illness and save lives, especially among children and the elderly. And it’s not too late to vaccinate!”

The vaccine, which offers protection through the entire flu season, is available in two forms: the flu shot or nasal spray. The shot is approved for everyone ages six (6) months and older, whereas the nasal spray is approved for healthy individuals 2-49 years old who are not pregnant. Additional steps to preventing illness include covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands, and avoiding those that are sick. If one does become ill with flu-like symptoms, he or she should stay at home and rest.

Residents are encouraged to contact their physicians or the Health Department to learn more about flu vaccination and other preventative measures. Cost for seasonal flu vaccination at the Health Department is \$30. Medicaid and Medicare are accepted, as well as private insurance, or clients may pay by cash or check. For more information or to schedule an appointment with the Health Department, call (800) 432-4121 or visit www.nwhealth.org.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties.