



Health & Community Services

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Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Respiratory and Gastrointestinal Illnesses Increase Locally

Kalamazoo, Mich. [February 21, 2017] – The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department is seeing an increase of respiratory and gastrointestinal (GI) illnesses throughout the County. Public Health Officials are asking that residents practice the following precautionary actions to keep themselves and their families healthy:

- Continue to get a flu-shot for everyone 6 months of age or older;
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people;
- Stay home from work and school for at least 24 hours if sick with respiratory or GI-like illnesses;
- Limit contact with others if you are sick;
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze;
- Wash your hands often with soap and water;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; and
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs

“Preventative actions and practices are key to protecting ourselves from respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses” said Jim Rutherford, Health Officer and Director at Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services. “We recommend that residents who have not yet received a flu vaccination do so and that all residents take these few extra steps to limit the impact of illness to our County.”

Respiratory (flu-like) illnesses may cause sore throat, cough, runny nose, sore and aching muscles in the limbs and back, and fever. Symptoms of gastrointestinal illness include vomiting and/or diarrhea for a period of 24-48 hours. Both respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses can be spread from person to person.

The Health & Community Services Department will continue to monitor illness activity County-wide. For questions about either respiratory or gastrointestinal illnesses, please contact KCHCS Communicable Disease Surveillance at (269) 373-5267. Additional resources, including disease factsheets and cleaning guidelines can be found on the KCHCS website: <http://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/default.asp> .

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