For Immediate Release

*MCHD to begin giving flu vaccines Oct. 1; book a clinic for your workplace*

**MORGANTOWN, WV (Sept. 23, 2019)** — You know that feeling. You have a fever, headaches, a runny nose and scratchy throat. Your body aches and you are too fatigued to get out of bed.

But those classic symptoms of flu, that can also include vomiting and diarrhea—especially in children—can be avoided or lessened with a flu vaccine.

Flu vaccines will be available by appointment at Monongalia County Health Department beginning Oct. 1.

“We encourage a flu vaccine for everybody above the age of 6 months, which is what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends,” said Jennifer Goldcamp, director of nursing at MCHD Clinical Services.

People preferably should get their flu shots by the end of October, Goldcamp noted. It takes about two weeks to become fully effective. Because families often begin gathering together for the holidays at Thanksgiving in late November, it’s best to be fully inoculated against flu by then to avoid getting sick.

“However, we always tell people it’s never too late to get your flu shot, because flu can last until April or May,” Goldcamp said.

Another option in addition to getting your flu vaccine at MCHD Clinical Services is to schedule a time for a public health nurse to come to your workplace to administer the inoculations. To schedule a “Flu Out,” it would be preferable if at least 20 individuals were interested in getting the vaccine. A Flu Out should result in fewer missed workdays by employees and fewer employees coming to work sick and infecting others.
An annual flu vaccine is important because protection can wane. Also, circulating flu strains can change from year to year. This year’s flu vaccine protects against different strains of flu than the one given last year. This year’s flu vaccine is a trivalent and protects against two A strains and one B strain of influenza.

MCHD Clinical Services also will offer the “high dose” vaccine with more antigens to give a bigger boost to people ages 65 and older whose immune systems might be weaker than when they were younger.

Children under the age of 6 months should not get the vaccine. Expectant mothers are encouraged to get it to pass protection on to their babies. Also, people who have severe allergies to eggs should talk to their health care provider about the flu vaccine. The CDC has updated its guidelines and recommends that in some cases, those with egg allergies receive the vaccine from a health care provider who can manage allergic conditions.

Most people who get the flu recover in a week or two. However, the flu can cause complications, especially in senior citizens, people with other health conditions and young children. Complications can include pneumonia, bronchitis and even death. The number of hospitalizations due to flu varies from season to season. In recent years, that number has been as low as 140,000 and as high as 710,000.

Flu can be contagious before you are diagnosed. It is spread through sneezing, coughing and germs that are left on surfaces that others encounter. In addition to vaccination, it’s also important to follow other measures to avoid flu. Wash your hands often, using soap and water. Avoid sick people; avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth; and clean and disinfect areas that may be contaminated with germs.

If you do get sick, the CDC recommends staying home for at least 24 hours after your fever has gone away, other than to seek medical treatment. Also, talk to your health care provider about taking antivirals to lessen the severity of the flu if you do become ill.

To schedule a clinic in your workplace, call MCHD Clinical Services at 304-598-5119.

Check out monchd.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD and on Instagram at #wvmchd for up-to-date information on health and wellness in the community.

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