

Public Health Points

York City Bureau of Health

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2013-2014 INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

Preparations for this winter's influenza season are well underway. Flu vaccines are out to doctors' offices, pharmacies, grocery stores, and public health clinics. Although there is at the current time very little flu activity in the state or locally, it won't be long until the number of flu cases starts to rise. Now is the time to put getting your annual flu shot at the top of the to-do list.

Depending upon the severity of the flu season, 9,000 to 40,000 deaths in the U.S. can be attributable to the flu. Far many more individuals with the flu are hospitalized or miss work or school. Much of this morbidity (illness, hospitalization, missed work or school) and mortality (deaths) could be prevented if more individuals received their flu immunization.

This year there are many choices available to most individuals wanting flu vaccine. Not only do they have a number of places to go, but also there are many types of flu vaccine available, all equally effective. For example, there is the standard 3-strain (two A strain antigens and one B strain antigen) vaccine and new this year a 4-strain (two A's and two B's) vaccine. Methods of delivering vaccine have also increased. There is the standard intramuscular injection (6 months of age and older), usually given the upper arm. There is the nasal spray (2 to 49 years of age), and more recently the intra-dermal injection (18 to 64 years of age) given just a few millimeters into the skin, usually on the forearm. Finally there is the high-dose flu vaccine for persons 65 years and older that contains an extra antigen boost in the hope of increased protection from the more serious consequences from the flu.

This year, as in previous years, the Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) recommend that everyone 6 months of age and older be vaccinated against the flu. Certain groups continue to be high risk and high priority to receive the flu vaccine: caretakers and close family members of infants under 6 months of age, pregnant women, persons 65 years of age and older, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities, healthcare workers, individuals with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, impaired immune system, and morbid or extreme obesity.

York City residents who are uninsured or underinsured (health insurance that doesn't cover flu vaccine) can call the City's Albert S. Weyer Health Center, 435 West Philadelphia Street, at 815-0910 to schedule an appointment. Uninsured and underinsured individuals living elsewhere in York County outside the City should call the York State Health Center at 771-4505 for information about their flu immunization program.

Up-to-date information about influenza vaccine and the current influenza season is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/flu and from the PA Department of Health at www.flufreepa.com.

Reportable Conditions – 2013 City of York, Pa		
Reported Cases	Sept.	Total
Animal Bites	10	84
Campylobacter Enteritis	0	2
Chlamydia	51	402
Cryptosporidiosis	0	2
Gonorrhea	42	173
Hepatitis A	0	1
Hepatitis B	0	2
Hepatitis C	6	67
Histoplasmosis	0	1
HIV Infection	1	16
Influenza, Type A	0	33
Influenza, Type B	0	17
Influenza, Not Specified	0	1
Invasive Group A Beta-Strep Disease	0	1
Lead Poisoning	1	16
Lyme Disease	3	6
Meningitis – Bacterial	0	1
Meningitis – Fungal	0	1
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection	1	42
Salmonellosis	0	3
Total Case Reports	116	872

Rabid Kitten in City Stresses Importance of Caution and Prevention

The recent report of a rabid kitten discovered in the City of York should remind us all of steps we can take to prevent rabies infection in humans, a disease that is fatal.

First, immunize dogs and cats against rabies. In the City of York it's the law. Our pets are the first defense barrier between us humans and wild animals with rabies. Our pets may encounter rabid animals in yards and woods. Exposed dogs and cats if unvaccinated can develop rabies quickly and die or may have to be euthanized.

Second, do not encourage children to play with discovered wild animals. Baby raccoons and stray kittens may be cute, but it's not worth it to end up with several kids and maybe some adults undergoing the rabies vaccine series. Even worse, as sometimes happens, is when a baby wild animal is brought into a school classroom for "Show & Tell," only to later discover the animal is rabid and a whole class has been exposed and needs the vaccine.

Third, avoid animals that are acting strangely. Many wild animals that get rabies – bats, raccoons, and skunks, for example – are nocturnal. Bats and other nocturnal animals out during the daytime are by definition acting strangely and should be avoided. Unvaccinated dogs and cats that are rabid are usually aggressive and will frequently attack humans and other animals even without provocation.

Rabies continues to be a serious and all too frequent problem in York. Much can be done to protect us and our pets, and much of it is commonsense. For more information about rabies, check out this website - www.cdc.gov/rabies.



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