

# Health Matters



from the Kane County Health Department

— November 22, 2017 —

## Trending Matters:



[CLICK](#) for info about flu shots

## Highlighting the importance of flu vaccine

The Kane County Health Department is encouraging residents to get a flu shot during **National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW), Dec. 3-9**. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu vaccination activity drops off quickly after the end of November. In other words, people stop getting the flu shot right at the time the CDC says typically is the start of the peak flu season.

NIVW is a national observance established to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination. We want to encourage more people to be vaccinated during the holiday season and into the new year.

The CDC recommends that everyone six months of age and older should be vaccinated against influenza, especially pregnant women, young children, people 65 years of age and older, and anyone with underlying health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or a weakened immune system. A flu vaccine is needed every year because flu viruses are constantly changing.

The vaccine is available at many locations, including neighborhood pharmacies and your primary care provider. A convenient "vaccine finder" can be found on our Web site by clicking [HERE](#).

People with the flu can spread it to others as far as 6 feet away. Flu viruses are spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Less often, a person might also get the flu by touching a surface or object that has a flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth or nose.



**In addition to getting a flu shot, you can also reduce your risk by:**

- **Washing your hands regularly with soap and water.** If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Practicing good cough etiquette,** such as coughing into your elbow instead of your hands.
- **Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth;** germs are spread this way. Avoiding close contact with sick people. If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

Our Website contains a wealth of information about the flu and its prevention. To learn more, you can find the info by clicking [HERE](#).

Some people are at greater risk for serious complications if they get the flu. This includes older people, young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), and persons who live in facilities like nursing homes. Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.

### ***Flu shots offered by Health Department***

Aurora office, 1240 N. Highland Ave.  
Clinic hours: 9 AM to 4 PM, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, while vaccine supply lasts.  
Cost: \$23.87, payable by check or cash.

The best way to protect yourself and your family from the flu this season is to get a flu shot.  
Call 630-208-3801 for more information.

## **Colorless, odorless CO can be deadly**



With cold weather and associated holidays approaching, you'll find yourself setting the thermostat on your furnace, maybe slaving over the stove a little more than normal, perhaps even firing up that wood burning stove and/or fireplace for a little ambiance.

What do all these have in common? Combustion, and the possibility of leaking carbon monoxide (CO) gas. And, if your hot water heater and clothes dryer operate on natural gas, they, too are possible sources of the dangerous CO gas. CO gas is colorless and odorless, which is what makes it so dangerous. It is produced any time a fossil fuel is burned.

"It's a product of combustion from an oven or furnace, or an improperly vented hot water heater or dryer," said Lt. Brian Berry of the Carpentersville Fire Department. Lt. Berry said problems can arise with these appliances if they are not properly maintained.

**Lt. Brian Berry, left**

# CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING



## Preventing CO poisoning requires following these guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- The most important step is to install a battery-operated or battery back-up CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds leave your home immediately and call 911.
- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Seek prompt medical attention if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseated.

Berry said the effects of CO poisoning are cumulative and produce flu-like symptoms. "Prolonged exposure can lead to unconsciousness and death." Even pets are not immune, he said.

Additionally, sources of CO gas can come from the use of a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside the home, basement, or garage or near a window. Berry also recommends never running a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the door open, and never try to heat your house with a gas oven.

To prevent CO poisoning it's important to keep appliances and their vents clean and in good repair. Because of the odorless, colorless nature of CO gas, it's crucial to have that detector in good working order. When it is activated, call 911 immediately. When the fire department arrives, they want to inspect your home and determine the cause of the detector's activation.

"You always want to err on the side of caution," Berry said. "We're always happy to help."

For more information on CO visit our website [HERE](#).



## Enjoying the holiday feasts – safely



One of the favorite holiday traditions is providing your family with a great, sumptuous feast. Nothing beats sitting around the table with your loved ones to share in the spirit of the season. One way to make sure that your or meals go off without a hitch, is to take precautions to prevent the spread of food borne illness. The Kane County Health Department offers the following food safety tips to help ensure your holiday meals are prepared in a safe manner.

Poultry and stuffed foods should be cooked so that they reach an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees F; cook meat and fish to at least 145 degrees F; cook pork, ground meats and ground fish to at least 155 degrees F. Beef, pork, veal and lamb roast, steak and chops) should be cooked to 145 degrees F, with a 3-minute "rest time" after removal from the heat source. A very important and inexpensive piece of equipment that every kitchen should have is a metal stem thermometer, which is available at any grocery store. How else will you know if your food is cooked to the proper temperature if you don't use a thermometer? Don't rely on guessing.

You should also take precautions to avoid cross-contamination. Cross contamination is the transfer of harmful microorganisms (germs) from one food to another. Contaminated hands, utensils or equipment can transfer microorganisms. Examples of cross-contamination are handling raw poultry or meats, and then handling some other food with juice from the meat or poultry still on your hands, or cutting raw poultry with a knife, then using that knife to cut vegetables without first washing the knife. That's why it is important to frequently wash hands, counters and cooking utensils as a meal is prepared.

Once the meal is over, cool down leftovers to 41 degrees F or below within six hours. The best way to do this is to place the leftover food in shallow pans (no thicker than three inches) before placing it in the refrigerator or freezer. Also, slice large cuts of meat and de-bone poultry before cooling or freezing. Avoid leaving leftovers out at room temperature once the meal is over.

Food borne illnesses can be serious enough to require hospitalization and may even be fatal. **Apply safe food handling principles and practices to every meal you prepare to help avoid illnesses during this holiday season and throughout the year.**



**To make sure your food is safe, follow these simple guidelines:**

**Clean:** Wash hands and surfaces often

**Separate:** Don't cross contaminate

**Cook:** Cook to the right temperature

**Chill:** Refrigerate promptly

For more information on Food Safety visit our website [HERE](#).



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