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**Genesee County
Health Department**
Your Health. Our Work.

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MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: January 31, 2020   **END DATE:** February 27, 2020

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RE: **Protect yourself and others from respiratory illness**

The Genesee County Health Department is issuing advice to residents on how to protect themselves and others from getting sick. Good health habits like covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands often can help prevent respiratory illnesses, like influenza, and stop the spread of germs. Handwashing also helps prevent gastrointestinal illness like norovirus. Flu and other serious respiratory illnesses are spread by cough, sneezing, or unclean hands. Most people touch their eyes, nose or mouth without even realizing it. This should be avoided as these are areas where germs can easily enter the body.

Protect yourself and others from getting sick by taking the following everyday actions:

1. Wash hands often with soap and warm water, and scrub for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

2. Cover nose and mouth with a tissue or flexed elbow when coughing or sneezing. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can, and immediately wash your hands.

3. Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.

4. Get vaccinated each year. The flu vaccine is widely available, including at the Genesee County Health Department.

5. Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth. Doing so can allow a virus to enter your body.

6. Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.

Some people, such as older adults, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease are at a high risk for serious complications from influenza and other respiratory illnesses. Vaccination remains the best protection against flu illness and is particularly important for people who are high risk. It is not too late to get a flu shot. The Genesee County Health Department strongly recommends that everyone six months of age and older get a flu shot to reduce the spread of flu and its negative outcomes. Influenza activity continues to be widespread and there are still weeks of flu season to come. The Genesee County Health Department would like to make sure that everyone stays healthy and takes the proper precautions to protect themselves and others from illness.

For more information, visit our website at www.gchd.us or call 810-237-4540 to make your flu shot appointment.

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