



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RICHD's last flu clinic is Nov. 2

The Rock Island County Health Department, or RICHD, will hold its last walk-in flu shot clinic on Tuesday, Nov. 2 at its offices at 2112 25th Ave., Rock Island. The clinic is open from 9 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m. No appointments are necessary.

The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines also will be offered on Tuesday. The Pfizer vaccine is offered on Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m. also with no appointment needed. The CDC has not authorized yet a lower-dose Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5-11, but that move could come this week after the FDA gave its OK on Oct. 29. RICHD will announce its plans for children ages 5-11 after CDC expected authorization. The health department expects to offer appointments for children to be vaccinated in private clinical rooms, instead of at mass clinic set-up.

Getting an annual flu vaccine is the first and best way to protect yourself and your family from the flu. The flu season typically begins in October and peaks between December and March. The flu is a contagious respiratory illness that can cause mild to severe illness. Serious cases of flu can result in hospitalization or death.

“Getting vaccinated now will offer good protection before the Thanksgiving and winter holidays,” RICHD Administrator Nita Ludwig said.

Ludwig also urges anyone who hasn't yet been vaccinated with one of the three widely available COVID-19 vaccines to get protected as soon as possible. Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time.

“Severe cases of both the flu and COVID-19 use the same healthcare resources — intensive care beds, ventilators, and already-exhausted, healthcare workers,” Ludwig said. “Our local hospital ICU and COVID-19 units still are quite full with unvaccinated COVID-19 patients. We worry that a severe flu season will exhaust those resources that have been stretched since March 2020

“Vaccines are our best protections against severe cases of both flu and COVID-19. This year, we have not only a flu vaccine, but also three highly effective COVID-19 vaccines to prevent serious illness, hospitalizations and deaths,” Ludwig said.

Last year was a light flu season because of near-universal masking and other protocols meant to curb both flu and COVID-19 transmission.

“However, this year we are seeing inconsistent mask wearing, which could make for a bad flu season,” Ludwig said. “If another time or day works better for you to get your flu vaccine, call the health department at 309-794-7080 to make an appointment. Also, many of our healthcare and pharmacy partners have walk-in hours or appointments readily available.”

With either the flu or COVID-19, RICHD recommends staying home when sick, wearing a mask, and frequently washing your hands. These everyday health practices will help protect against becoming infected with either flu or COVID-19 viruses.

Both COVID-19 and flu can have varying degrees of signs and symptoms, ranging from no symptoms (asymptomatic) to severe symptoms. Common symptoms that COVID-19 and flu share include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/having chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Vomiting and diarrhea
- Change in or loss of taste or smell, although this is more frequent with COVID-19.

With RICHD flu clinics, there is no out-of-pocket expense to those with Medicare Part B or an Illinois Medicaid card. Most Blue Cross, UnitedHealth Care, Health Alliance, Aetna, Coventry/First Health, HFN, HealthLink, and Humana insurance plans are accepted. Please bring all insurance cards with you to the clinic. Insurance coverages change frequently, so please check with your insurance carrier to make sure your flu shot is covered. For those not using insurance, the cost is \$35. High-dose vaccines for seniors are \$55 without insurance. Visa and Mastercard will be accepted. For more information, please call the health department at 309-794-7080.

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