PROTECTING OUR LITTLE ONES

You do everything you can think of to protect your baby…You don’t smoke around your baby. You don’t let others smoke around your baby. You put your baby in a car seat, and never let someone who has been drinking drive when your little one is in the car. You put your baby to sleep on its back to avoid SIDS and bundle him or her up against the winter weather.

There is one more thing you can do to keep baby safe, something you might not have thought about: You should get your seasonal flu shot.

“Anyone that has a child under five years of age or anyone that cares for children under five years old should be getting an influenza shot,” advises Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director of the Central Michigan District Health Department. Children less than a year old have a higher rate of hospitalization than people over 65 years of age according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC).

“It’s pretty simple,” said Dr. Graham, “infants and young kids are vulnerable to the ravages of influenza. Our infants and toddlers can be protected from influenza if moms, dads, grandmas, grandpas and caregivers get a flu shot.”

In addition, if you live with someone or you care for someone who is at high risk for complications from a bout of influenza, then you should get an influenza shot. Below is a list of people who should get a flu shot this year:

- Infants and children ages 6 months – 5 years of age
- Those age 6-49 years with:
  - Heart disease
  - Kidney disease
  - Cancer
  - Pulmonary disease including asthma and cystic fibrosis
  - Metabolic disease (diabetes)
  - Immune disorders (HIV infection) or therapy (chemotherapy)
  - Blood disorders (sickle cell anemia)
  - Long-term aspirin therapy
- Persons age 50 years and older
- Children and teens (ages 6 months – 18 years) receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Residents of nursing homes or other long-term care facilities
- All pregnant women
- Health care workers involved in direct, hands-on, face-to-face patient care
People Caring for People

- Household contacts and out of home caregivers (siblings, parents, daycare workers) of children 4 years of age and younger and/or those that have close contact with persons who have a high risk condition.

Flu shots are available from your local health department. Please call your local health department branch office at: (989) 846-6541 (Arenac County), (989) 539-6731 (Clare County), (989) 426-9431 (Gladwin County), (989) 773-5921 (Isabella County), (231) 832-5532 (Osceola County), (989) 366-9166 (Roscommon County) or log onto www.cmdhd.org for more information. Many family physicians and pediatricians also have influenza shots available.

Get an influenza shot so you won't give your baby the flu.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department which serves residents in Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon Counties.